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KINGS, CHURCHILLS AND STATESMEN

A Foreigner's View

BY

KNUT HAGBERG

Translated from the Swedish by
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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THE sub-title with which the English edition of this little book is furnished is intended to indicate its aim. A foreigner's point of view upon English dead and living personalities may be compared with a traveller's impression of a strange city through which he has wandered for a few days only. But the citizens of such a city, who are familiar with all its streets and squares, may perhaps nevertheless listen to the stranger. Perhaps the very fact that he is a stranger enables him to perceive some of the unique features of the town more readily than those who have lived there for decades.

The essays on English personalities which this book contains can interest the English reader only in so far as the author, in spite of probable errors in detail, succeeds, in his capacity of foreigner, in discerning a feature common to the originals of the portraits he has tried to draw, namely, the essential "Englishness" of these people of very dissimilar character and very dissimilar importance.

It is a ticklish matter to judge a human being; the whole truth about him is indeed always hidden, and mistakes are easy to make. Over some of the figures portrayed the author has meditated long; at others he has only been able to cast a hurried glance, but the question of how hastily the strokes are drawn seems to him unimportant compared with that of whether they may sometimes succeed in producing the illusion of a living face.

K. H.

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KINGS, CHURCHILLS & STATESMEN

KINGS

I

GEORGE IV

THACKERAY has given the following description of King George IV of England :—

" He left an example for age and for youth
To avoid.
He never acted well by Man or Woman,
And was as false to his Mistress as to his Wife.
He deserted his Friends and his Principles.
He was so ignorant that he could scarcely Spell;
But he had some skill in Cutting out Coats,
And an undeniable Taste for Cookery.
He built the Palaces of Brighton and of Buckingham,
And for these Qualities and Proofs of Genius,
An admiring Aristocracy
Christened him the ' First Gentleman in Europe.' "

Though this judgment may on the whole be just, it cannot be called very subtle. It was pronounced during the heyday of the moral Victorian generation, when all who were not Victorian were freely classed with publicans and sinners. Though our own generation has very little reason to complain of the motes in our fathers' eyes, the echo of Thackeray's summary judgment on poor King George may still be heard, and one can plainly perceive it in Ragnar Sjöberg's recently published

book, *Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV*. This author's one-sided conception of the monarch in question is the worst defect in a book which is, for all that, both readable and worth reading; in the first chapter one even meets with such assertions as that all the members of the House of Hanover were devoid of political capacity, that the reign of George III marks a period of intellectual decline and that George IV and his people were alike indifferent to the intellectual life—assertions which it is superfluous to dispute. Sjöberg tells his story well, but his narrative would have gained in interest if the light and shade had been more fairly distributed.

Life among the highest English society during the first years of the nineteenth century is well known to us through memoirs; Greville and Creevy are the sources most drawn upon. The chief interest of the aristocracy seems to have lain in the pleasures of the table; all who have read anything about that epoch are familiar with various descriptions of ortolan pasty, and not once is the most superficial historian able to escape theoretic intimacy with pheasants stuffed with *pâté de foie gras* and with various kinds of Madeira and old port. Eating was taken with astonishing seriousness in London a little more than a hundred years ago. They began the day with a breakfast which was not over before it was time to change for dinner. The tone of society was not quite without grace; there were plenty of witty gentlemen and ladies; a pungent repartee was highly esteemed, noted and quoted.

During the course of the day they discussed political questions with knowledge and warmth,

but quite soon after dinner the hour struck when abstract problems made way for personal interests. The neighbours' affairs, especially their most intimate affairs, occupied their minds from then until morning, and they were commented on by lords and Secretaries of State with great ardour, though with less consideration for truth than for amusement, while the port decanter went its rounds. Much of this piquant gossip has been preserved for a grateful posterity, but one may perhaps venture to assert that it was less the exceptionally great number of the scandals, than the extraordinary interest in them, which characterised the years of George IV's reign. One of the lions of the company was Sheridan, whose brilliant comedy, *The School for Scandal*, may, in all essentials, be regarded as a highly realistic picture.

In the seventeen eighties the young Prince of Wales made his *entrée* into this society, which was then beginning to assume the form which it was long to retain. The young Prince was glad to have come of age and to be free from parental control. His father, George III, was in many respects an excellent man; a citizen on the throne, ideally sincere, economical and orderly, but somewhat narrow and, moreover, embittered by the ignominious result of his struggle to obtain for himself some political influence; only in later life did he become purely pathetic, when the shadow lay heavily over his spirit and he sat alone at Windsor clumsily playing his beloved Handel. His eccentricity included an ineradicable distrust of the heir apparent, a trait known to be not uncommon among monarchs. The mother, Charlotte, born Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, was a typical scold whose

indisputable virtue was sufficiently guaranteed by her monumental ugliness. The young Prince George, the eldest of a long string of brothers, had endured a very serious education and had studied the nature of morality in bulky works in Latin, Greek and French. It became, one may perhaps say, a little too much of a good thing, and the Prince longed sadly and in vain for any intercourse other than that of reverend deans and professors. When the day of deliverance was at hand he bade them farewell without regret.

The Prince of Wales was not ungifted either in respect of the head or of the heart. His judgment was good. His best friends were two of England's most brilliant men, Sheridan and Fox. Although his letters are not epistolary masterpieces, he was not without literary culture. Byron relates that he had heard him intimately and wisely appreciate both Homer and Walter Scott. His humanity has not been called in question; in England he had not many opportunities to put it into practice, but in his hereditary country of Hanover he put an end to barbarity in the administration of the law. He has been compared with Edward VII; he was certainly not a statesman like his great-nephew, but the two royal profiles are not unlike one another.

It was, however, other attributes of the Prince of Wales that were chiefly valued in the circles in which he was to move through life.

In Vanity Fair the title "man of the world" is the highest distinction, and the phrase "honest man" is a little derogatory. The Prince of Wales had all the qualifications for playing a great rôle in society. He was charmingly handsome and had an exceptionally fine and athletic body. He moved

with unassuming elegance and played his part with exquisite dignity right up to twelve o'clock at night, when he was apt to become a little forward with shapely ladies. His bows soon became world famous; they united dignity, amiability and grace, they expressed courtesy, good-natured comradeship and conscious royalty; since the days of Louis XIV no one in that province had attained such eminence. The Prince of Wales speedily became fashionable and popular. He was a *frondeur* in politics, laughed at the Tories and gave evidence of open-mindedness and a moderate radicalism.

He was royal; why should he not tread the broad and comfortable royal road?

The Prince of Wales was only twenty-two years old when he first encountered a very pretty Catholic lady by name Mrs. Fitzherbert. She was a person in every way worthy of the highest respect. She had contrived to become twice a widow, but was still young and looked younger than she was. The Prince fell frantically in love, but her adorer, to attain his end, must first meet her at the altar. This, for him, was a very risky course; if it became known in the highest quarters the Prince of Wales might as well give up all hopes of the crown. But the voice of the heart silenced the voice of reason, and the Prince of Wales was married to Mrs. Fitzherbert. It was agreed, however, that the affair should take place secretly; by this means Mrs. Fitzherbert was able to satisfy her conscience and the prince to protect his right of succession.

Now followed a series of prosperous years. The Prince built a palace at Brighton, and the little fishing village was quickly transformed into a fashionable watering-place. Mrs. Fitzherbert had

no reason to complain of her position; the Prince and his friends certainly lingered longer over the port after dinner than she would have wished, but she was treated with exquisite deference by everyone, including the royalties. The other side of the medal was that of finance. The Prince was more disposed to assist needy friends than to settle his debts; as, moreover, he denied himself nothing, it became difficult to keep within the limits of his establishment. We should bear in mind he lived at a time when, as Lord Durham has asserted, one could cut a tolerable figure on £40,000 a year, and the Prince of Wales wished to live not tolerably but royally. He soon got into the clutches of the moneylenders and his debts grew like a snowball. His father, King George III, firmly refused to countenance his evil ways. The Prince's friends petitioned in Parliament for additional votes; these were furnished, though quite inadequately and only after humiliating scenes, for a Protestant zealot called on Fox for an assurance that the rumour of the Prince's morganatic marriage with a Catholic was a black and foul lie. Mrs. Fitzherbert was under a cloud.

It was at this time that Beau Brummel appeared in the Prince's entourage. An ungrateful posterity has forgotten that it has Brummel to thank for the fashion of stiff collars, but, in spite of this distinction, the society of the famous dandy was not very likely to be elevating.

The Prince of Wales developed into a sort of corpulent epicure, and his natural good-humour became less noticeable in proportion as his waistcoats increased in girth. He came under the influence of Lady Jersey, a singularly depraved

lady, and in order to clear up his affairs felt himself prepared for anything. The King put forward a definite stipulation; the Prince of Wales must undertake to marry a Protestant Princess. The Prince did it too. That is the first of the deadly sins for which George IV is declared to be deprived of all hope of pardon human or divine; it may be questioned, bearing in mind the *milieu* and the moment, whether his crime was more heinous than others which have been less harshly judged.

The marriage candidates proposed were two, the Queen's niece, Princess Louise, who later became Queen of Prussia, and Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Unfortunately the Prince rejected the former: he probably considered his mother's blood more than sufficiently represented in the English Royal Family. He now took for consort a person who of all those possible seems to have been the most impossible that it is possible to conceive.

Princess Caroline had her good points; she was lively, good-natured and not stupid. But she had a tendency to hysteria which later on obtained abundant scope; she was uncontrolled and tactless.

In this way she was destined from the first to displease a Prince who was in everything a stickler for etiquette; that she further took a pride in being able to dress herself in five minutes was no recommendation in the eyes of one who had learned from Brummel to devote as many hours to his toilet. They had no illusions, either of them, before the marriage. Princess Caroline was convinced that her husband was a profligate old egoist. The Prince felt sick whenever his approaching marriage was mentioned. After the first encounter,

he had to fortify himself with cognac, and the Princess did not improve matters by immediately beginning to joke about Mrs. Fitzherbert, Mrs. Fair-fat-and-forty as she so wittily and tactfully called her. In order to get through the wedding days—and nights—the Prince was continuously drunk, and in a short time the happy married couple parted. A daughter who was born became a fresh bone of contention. The parents never met. The Prince did his best to annoy his consort. The Princess allied herself with his enemies and, in solitary moments, prepared little waxen images of her husband which she then threw into the fire, rejoicing to see them melt in the embers.

The Prince of Wales succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and resumed his old habits. A touch of staidness began to be observed in him; he preferred to sit still—that may perhaps be explained by his corpulence—and occupied himself with Mrs. Fitzherbert's little adopted daughter. In the evenings he went in to the dinner-table with the same elegance and pomp, and his bow became even more majestic. Worry was not wanting. When his hair grew grey under the wig, he began to feel the irksomeness of his position as a Prince of Wales without influence; for every attempt to approach the Government miscarried. He began, too, to be unpopular among the people who, for some reason, conceived a warm affection for Princess Caroline.

The gout already made itself felt, and Mrs. Fitzherbert began to grow old. The first gentleman in Europe got very little pleasure out of his amusements.

When the mental disease of George III grew obvious to everyone, the Prince of Wales became Regent. As a politician he gave proof of wisdom and firmness; he has been reproached because his liberalism was changed to an unbending conservatism, but he is not alone in the change. He formed a bond of friendship with Lady Hertford, a mature, imperious lady whose husband Thackeray and Disraeli have immortalised in their romances. Mrs. Fitzherbert drifted away from him; but as Regent he would in any case have been unable to go on living with her. At last, in the year 1820, George III died and the Prince of Wales's long time of waiting was over.

His consort had then for some time been living abroad. Her journeyings were, to say the least, eccentric; she roamed round the world with an indescribable retinue, appeared at costume balls in a garb which is only moral when it covers, or rather fails to cover, a beauty, and babbled incessantly. George IV was willing to allow her £50,000 if she continued to live abroad; but nevertheless she came home, where her consort was at the moment busy with the preparations for his coronation, at which he intended once again to astonish the world by his appearance. Now began the monstrous matrimonial cause which did more than anything else to mar the reputation of George IV. He himself was well enough convinced of Caroline's unfaithfulness, but the members of the Upper House, as the appointed court, saw her at close quarters and, it has been said, soon became convinced that any unfaithfulness on her part lay outside the bounds of possibility. The Queen had the advantage of good counsel and, as we know, it

all ended with the withdrawal of the charges. The whole affair is deplorable, but both parties seem to me more to be pitied than blamed.

Queen Caroline died soon afterwards. King George became free, but scarcely the happier for that. His new mistress, Lady Conyngham, was a tyrannical person; but George could not bear to be alone and he had no other companionship. He was not on good terms with his Ministers, and his brothers, the Dukes of York, Cumberland, Sussex, Kent, Gloucester and the future William IV, all kindred spirits of their eldest brother, had passed away or were in failing health. They did not abandon the friends of their youth or—which is more uncommon—their mistresses, but their visits became ever fewer, for the old gentlemen all suffered from gout.

King George soon became so infirm that he withdrew from social life, and the first gentleman in Europe grew old at Windsor, far from the world. Lady Conyngham, for the matter of that, saw to it that her dominion was not interfered with by any outside influence. As the years passed the old King's infirmity was no longer confined to the stiffness of gout; his memory failed, and in his latter days he sat for the most part meditating upon his imaginary war achievements. But his dignity, at least in externals, remained to the end.

The little daughter of the deceased Duke of Kent, Princess Victoria, had once to pay a visit to her eldest uncle. Her mother, the not very amiable Duchess of Kent, had from the beginning pointed out her "wicked uncle" as a warning example, but old Uncle George proved not to be so very dangerous. He told her to put out her little paw,

as he called it, patted it and gave her his portrait set in brilliants.

The scene is full of sentiment. The little girl stands with terror in her heart before the old gentleman of whose sinful ways she has dim but lively apprehensions, and finds him to be a quite kindly uncle. She could afford to be a little lenient in her judgment, for the future was hers. The old King knew it himself; his golden youth belonged to the past, and old age and port had rendered its heroes infirm and stiff. They had outlived their time, all the gentlemen of the eighteenth century; the time was ripe for the resplendent Victorian era, which impatiently awaited the exit of the old actors. Judgment of their acting on the stage of the world's theatre became very severe, and even they seemed aware of it. At last Queen Victoria's wicked uncles, the last champions of the old regime, made their exit; they bowed as well as the gout would let them before the hissing public, and quoted Ronsard without any pathetic gestures:

> "Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, Madame,
> Las! le temps non, mais nous nous en allons."

II

THE WIDOW OF WINDSOR

PRINCE ALBERT, who like most Germans took a great interest in science and literature, dreamed at the beginning of his married life of making the Court of Windsor a meeting-place for the heroes of art, poetry and thought. It became, as we know, nothing of the sort; for his illustrious Consort, Queen Victoria of England, made it known with precision that she "had no fancy to encourage such people."

Those who were thus excluded had, however, their revenge; among the Victorian intellectuals royalty was not on the whole over-popular. This was doubtless a matter of indifference to her; but it has not been to the credit of her reign; in the consciousness of many, Queen Victoria has become the embodiment of prosaic and middle-class dullness. The great mass of Englishmen have looked up to her with unmixed feelings of loyalty where she sits enthroned in majestic marble in front of Buckingham Palace, but all the men of talent who are shut out from the exercise of power but who, owing to their ability to write, mean a good deal to posterity, have shrugged their shoulders when they passed that most imposing monument, as if to say, Providence absent-mindedly gave this commonplace woman a position from which she could impress the stamp of her will upon history, while

so many interesting men and men of genius had to be content with building castles in the air.

There is a certain irony in the fact that twenty years after her death Victoria made a grandiose entry into the circle from which she held aloof to the last. During her life she had attracted and had been attracted by natures which were as different as possible from her own; two of her Prime Ministers, those disillusioned sceptics and markedly superior intellectuals, Melbourne and Disraeli, were undoubtedly enamoured of her, for all that they qualified their enchantment by impertinent asides. Some years later one of the most disillusioned sceptics of modern literature met the same fate. A keen master of epigram, a brain as cool as it is luminous, a clever ironist, thought to write a satire on the Queen; and there is no doubt that Lytton Strachey came in the end to be a little in love with the woman.

Lytton Strachey's book about Queen Victoria has been translated into Swedish; so I assume here that it is known to the reader. Regarded as literature the book is absolutely epoch-making. The best attempts at historical human presentment which have appeared of late years in England and France have for the most part been more or less successful imitations of Lytton Strachey's masterpiece. For my own part I must confess that I consider Lytton Strachey's book to be the most entertaining, most scholarly and most artistic biography I can remember to have read. With a combination of psychological insight and stylistic mastery he has created a portrait which is as definite as it is living. Irony plays a great part in Lytton Strachey's book—and Victoria lends herself to

irony—but this is qualified by sympathy and tenderness, while the peculiar blending of malice and affection has given the book an unusual kind of charm. The shadows have become alive in his picture of Victoria's long life, the poetry of which he has sought to sum up in the concluding sentence of the book, in which he imagines the aged Queen on her death-bed striving to recall some of the pictures from her history: "Passing back and back, through the cloud of years to older and ever older memories—to the spring woods at Osborne, so full of primroses for Lord Beaconsfield—to Lord Palmerston's queer clothes and high demeanour, and Albert's face under the green lamp and Albert's first stag at Balmoral and Albert in his blue and silver uniform—and the Baron coming in through a doorway, and Lord M. dreaming at Windsor with the rooks cawing in the elm trees, and the Archbishop of Canterbury on his knees in the dawn, and the old King's turkey-cock ejaculations, and Uncle Leopold's soft voice at Claremont, and Lehzen with the globes, and her mother's feathers sweeping down towards her, and a great old repeater watch of her father's in its tortoiseshell case, and a yellow rug and some friendly flounces of sprigged muslin, and the trees and the grass at Kensington."

It is not to minimise the admiration which is due to Lytton Strachey to say that his sources are productive and rich. The material for a biography of Queen Victoria is enormous; one has much to choose from before deciding to relate from her life any detail which seems characteristic. She herself in letters and diaries has recorded her experiences and opinions with an honesty and openness which

could not be more complete; nor indeed had Victoria any secrets to conceal. Moreover, all the biographies of the eminent Victorians teem with more or less picturesque contributions to the characterisation of the Queen.

In the spring of 1926 the literature concerning Victoria was augmented by a particularly important publication. It is a selection of the Queen's correspondence embracing the years 1862–1878; the compilation has been admirably done by the historian Buckle, known by his monumental life of Disraeli. This huge book has not the same charm as, for example, the diary of her girlhood edited by Lord Esher, in which Lord Melbourne's peculiar touch fascinates almost at every turn, and in which all the angles and recesses of a young girl's heart have been laid bare with a charming spontaneity. Nor is the book so personal and intimate as the two volumes of idylls at Balmoral. Here it is affairs of State rather than personal matters which stand in the foreground. Victoria's more intimate letters are interwoven with the ceremonious despatches of Ministers and the elegant effusions of crowned and uncrowned Diplomats. It is in the centre of European high politics that we move, but in this purely political correspondence, historically of the most extraordinary interest, the angry and world-deciding debates about War and Peace form themselves into a background, against which the figure of a human being, of a woman, appears in bold relief. The swarm of Princes and Statesmen arrange themselves under one's gaze in a wide circle round a little black-clad, corpulent lady, and the history of Europe in the 'sixties and 'seventies appears, as one reads, more

and more as the biography of a widow at Windsor.

The Letters of Queen Victoria, 1862–1878, contains much that is new from the point of view both of general history and of biography. It is the latter which chiefly concerns us here. In Lytton Strachey's book the presentment of this period is rather scanty; he points out that the material, otherwise so overwhelmingly rich, is comparatively poor just with regard to the three years after Albert's death. The recently published volume has filled this gap; and for the benefit of those of Lytton Strachey's Swedish readers who have not time to go through the vast correspondence I shall now relate something of its contents.

Albert had died in December 1861. On New Year's Day 1862 appears the first entry in Victoria's diary after the terrible blow befell her. In former years on New Year's Day the music from the grounds at Osborne had awakened the happily married pair; the children had waited outside the room with their New Year's gifts. And now the little Arthur—afterwards Duke of Connaught—with his bunch of flowers, and the Prince with his bunch of flowers, and the Princesses with their neat drawings, could only remind her that all was over. "I could scarcely touch my breakfast."

Some days later Victoria wrote to Palmerston: "The things of this world are of no interest to the Queen, beyond the satisfaction she must experience if Peace is maintained and this country is in prosperity; for *her* thoughts are fixed *above*.—The Queen leads the most utterly wretched and desolate life that can be imagined. Where *all was* peaceful sunshine and perfect happiness (which the

troubles and worries of her position rendered very necessary) there is now utter *desolation*, *darkness* and *loneliness*, and she feels herself daily more and more worn and wretched. The eternal future is her only comfort." For a long time to come this tone is more or less noticeable in all that Victoria writes.

Two years later in a letter to Uncle Leopold of Belgium she can still express the wish that her lonely path may at the least be short.

Nevertheless the letters now published seem to me to show that Victoria's dependence upon Albert has been exaggerated. She had suffered the worst that could befall her, she had lost the best, but—in spite of everything—she knew, too, that that which is not the best is yet good. It is a feature of her violent outbreak of sorrow which has not sufficiently been considered. It accords with that which was the foundation of her being, her tenacious conservatism, her instinctive and deep love for the past and the known, her equally instinctive and deep distrust of the future and dislike of the unknown, to which she gave form when, on New Year's Eve 1877 she wrote in her diary that she was always distressed at "parting with a year." That which most alarmed her at Albert's death was the complete ignorance of the future. With Albert, there was the known and the tried, there was memory and habit, there was the palpable and the actual. Widowhood was not only loss, it was a life which she had not tried and of which she knew nothing, it was an unfamiliar black dress, it was new advisers in place of the dead, it was a new attitude towards the children, a new relation with the Ministers, it was suddenly to be removed into an unknown and therefore hateful *milieu*. Each

day involved a beginning full of uncertainty; Victoria shivered every morning.

But after some years it was otherwise. Life without Albert was no longer something unknown. She knew what it felt like to be alone, she had accustomed herself to the black dress, she had the memories also of the time after Albert's death. She wanted nothing else. She was now used to that. She went on being a widow, she went on being " in mourning," but in time the shadow of the departed paled. It was believed and it is thought still that this was only an expression of a loss always equally painful. It was perhaps something else. The irresistible power called death had intervened in Victoria's life and compelled her to alter it; she had been Albert's wife and must needs become the Widow of Windsor; but now that she was a widow, nothing would induce her to change her position again. Perhaps not even Lytton Strachey has fully understood that once she had accepted her new position, with its retirement and monotony, she felt herself at home in it and, guided by her strong and instinctive conservatism, was unwilling to depart from it. But interest in the world, love of actuality, strength of will and vital force have in few been stronger than in the Widow of Windsor whom many supposed to live only for a shadow.

She had written to Palmerston that this world no longer had any interest for her. Yet not more than a couple of months later she took occasion to send to the same statesman a highly indignant letter when certain instructions had been issued without specific royal sanction. And many months had not gone by before the political task had entirely taken hold of her. She said that her aim

was to realise Albert's political ideas; she really believed that it was so, but in fact her own judgment very soon came to be the only authority, and happily she had no idea how entirely unlike Albert's principles her own political conclusions often were.

It was foreign policy which chiefly held her interest; apart from this it was really only on questions of patronage that she met her Ministers with steel against steel. The 'sixties and 'seventies were an uneasy time for diplomatists. Several great wars were launched; several more threatened to break out and were only averted at the eleventh hour. The political atmosphere underwent a metamorphosis; the balance of power in Europe was more radically altered than it had been in two hundred years. Into the exclusive assembly of the great Powers a parvenu made a boisterous entry, settled down into the most comfortable chair and soon behaved as if it had become the centre of the whole salon. In England, as elsewhere, there was no more important problem than the question of what position one ought to take up towards the new-comer.

The position of Victoria was determined in the first place entirely by her sympathy for her many Coburg relatives. Albert had taught her to admire a Germany in which the chief elements were Rosenau and Heidelberg, parks in the moonlight and melancholy music. When she and Albert had married off their eldest daughter to the Crown Prince of Prussia, they did so in blissful ignorance that there was any particular difference between Berlin and Rosenau, Albert's paradise in Coburg. The young Princess Victoria herself, who was like her father in everything, shared the illusion; she certainly

found a number of things different from what she had expected, but, as she was very happy with her Fritz, she made no fuss about the matter in her letters home. When Albert died she still preserved the hope that Germany would be united under a Prussia that was liberal, humanitarian and polished.

Palmerston had certainly seen from the beginning with complete clearness that the Prussia of Albert and Victoria had, in spite of its many merits in other respects, this small defect, that it did not exist. But Victoria was not one to give up a dear illusion needlessly, and Palmerston did not succeed in convincing her. There was only one man who succeeded in that, and Victoria's attitude towards Bismarck receives the clearest illumination in the lately published papers.

Bismarck indeed was in every way as unlike an Englishman as he well could be. He had one aim, to persuade the great Powers, as someone has expressed it, not to agree upon a rendezvous at Leipzig, in the event of war. On the other hand, he had no rigorous principles as to how this should be brought about. Englishmen have as a rule very hazy notions as to where in the end they want to arrive; on the other hand, they have decided opinions as to what in any juncture is "the decent thing to do"; their statesmen seldom have aims but often have principles. Those of England's greatest politicians in modern times, who have deliberately and without scruple extricated themselves from perilous positions, have been, the one a Jew, and the other a Celt; neither Disraeli nor Lloyd George have English blood in their veins. But Queen Victoria was English from crown to heel. Disraeli won her confidence because in him unscrupulous-

ness was largely tempered by an extraordinary tactfulness in small things, and his Oriental amiability prevented her from observing a deal of not over-gentlemanly political shuffling. With Bismarck it was otherwise; between him and Victoria there began an embittered strife which was not composed until the Queen's grandson annihilated the old Chancellor with a ducal title and a certificate of senility.

Victoria's principal source of information concerning Germany lay naturally in the correspondence of the Crown Princess Victoria. It makes, moreover, very entertaining reading and is uniformly sympathetic, witty and full of temperament. Bismarck, as we know, suspected her of espionage on behalf of England, but never has a suspicion been less well founded. Although England, on natural grounds, remained always dearer to her than her newly adopted country, to whose manners and customs she was utterly foreign, she was, from the beginning to end, loyal to Germany. In critical situations she took Germany's part with such warmth that the correspondence with her mother became on occasions a pretty warlike exchange of notes. But she disapproved from the beginning of Bismarck's policy; she had in her blood the English liberalism, and her husband shared her aversion from the Prussian bureaucratic system. In England she had been accustomed to royal personages being treated as royal; her first impression of Bismarck was that he was a rude boor, and the impression became permanent. Already in 1863 she had begun to write complaining of Bismarck's casual and disrespectful manner; what she has to relate is undeniably startling even for one

who has a very moderate respect for etiquette. Queen Victoria was beside herself; one does not treat the Queen of England's daughter in this way. But it had very little effect upon her general attitude towards Germany. She knew that the Queen of Prussia—like most German princesses—was in complete agreement with her on the question of Bismarck. They consoled themselves with the reflection that the Junker was a fortuitous political phenomenon which soon would disappear.

Thus Victoria decidedly took Germany's part in the Schleswig-Holstein conflict; that England did not intervene in favour of Denmark was in great measure to her credit—or her blame. Palmerston and Russell, respectively Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, would, if they had been left alone, without doubt have prevented the annexation; the Prince of Wales was, through his bride, entirely committed to Denmark's interest, and during the Dano-German war founded once for all his foreign political sympathies. But Victoria was steadfast. Little as she was influenced by traditional motives, she held first and foremost to the fact that Denmark was opposed to many of her ancient allies.

It soon became apparent that Bismarck was no fortuitous phenomenon; he seemed, on the contrary, to be the embodiment of the future. Victoria became aware that he was planning war against Austria; the Queen of Prussia informed her that her Consort, King William, had fallen into complete dependence upon "an astute and unscrupulous man who had entirely changed him, and against whom there is unhappily no help." Bismarck himself seems to have troubled very little about

diplomatic secrecy. He openly told the British Ambassador at Berlin that he was afraid an acute illness would prevent him from forcing on the new war which he planned. It was a gloomy outlook. Already in 1864 Victoria in a letter to the King of the Belgians had called the Prussians "atrocious" and "odious." In the correspondence with the Prussian Royal Family Bismarck was always called "the wicked man"; the German Princes used the phrase without scruple. Finally, Victoria wrote a letter to King William; in a very lofty tone she exhorted him not to begin a war for which history would hold his country responsible; she adjured him, ere he yielded to Bismarck, to "pause before you permit so fearful an act as the commencement of a war." Protests, be they never so well justified, avail little, however, when the interests of a powerful State are at stake. The German-Austrian war not only ended with the humiliation of Austria; those German States which sympathised with what Victoria thought to be just, and which were ruled by her kinsmen, were annexed. The House of Hanover and its relations were dethroned.

With admirable loyalty the Crown Princess Victoria sought to bring about an agreement. In her letters she put forward tactfully the Prussian point of view, but in vain. Victoria in her letters to her daughter enjoys giving constant digs at a certain nation which has a way of devouring all it can get. To the outraged sense of justice and pity for her expelled princely relatives was joined the bitterness of defeat. Bismarck had clearly shown that he could defy the Queen of England with impunity.

Before the Franco-Prussian war Victoria suc-

ceeded in making clear to the continental Powers that any infringement of Belgium's neutrality would involve war with England. It is difficult to determine whether this declaration thwarted any prearranged plans of attack. During the Franco-German war England meanwhile won no diplomatic victories. The German Press conducted a violent campaign against Englishmen and Bismarck was always able to describe England as a negligible quantity. It was the time of Gladstone's rise to power; the Liberal statesman's pacifism was scarcely adapted to strengthen the position of the country in foreign politics. Victoria exerted herself to obtain admission to the Peace negotiations, but with small result. In her diaries she confines herself to appealing to God with prayers for mercy for those lives which are now being wasted without advantage to mankind. Any actual intervention she seems not to have ventured to contemplate, and Gladstone in any circumstances stood in the way. She had to content herself with shuddering over some brutal cynicisms which Bismarck let slip. One cannot help wondering what Bismarck really thought he gained by his many boasts. One little triumph she obtained, but it was of small importance. A German general had "captured" a silken screen belonging to the Empress of the French, which he tactfully sent as a present to the Crown Princess of Prussia who, insulted, in her turn despatched the screen to England so that Victoria might restore it to its rightful owner. The English Foreign Secretary took occasion to make a fitting distinction between war trophies and stolen goods, and characterised the latter as being such as could not be touched by the Queen

of England. The gesture looked well, but the honour was after all a poor compensation for the loss of influence.

The War had for a time smoothed the relationship between Bismarck and the Prussian Royal Family; hardly was Peace concluded before the Empress Augusta and the Crown Prince and Princess renewed their lamentations. The Kultur-Kampf brought the indignation to its height; it seems to have been hoped that Providence would intervene and rid Germany of "the horrid man." Bismarck remained, but, on the other hand, Gladstone disappeared, and thus the relationship between Victoria and the hated German was altered.

Hitherto Bismarck's course had been a long string of victories. With Disraeli's appearance in the arena there began for Bismarck a succession of political defeats. With the help of the gifted Oriental, Victoria was to show that Bismarck had somewhat underrated her importance.

It seems to a very great extent to have been Victoria's doing that war against France was averted in 1875. The rapid recovery of France had not entered into the plans of Bismarck and Moltke; somewhat imprudently they spoke openly of the new war which should render the French harmless for all time. Before intervening Victoria wrote to the Tsar Alexander and assured herself of his support in the event of a conflict.

Shortly afterwards it was made clear in the most express terms to Berlin that a new war with France would without the smallest doubt mean war with England also.

Bismarck at once apprehended the change in the

situation and entirely readjusted his policy. He hastily became an Anglophil. He won the Crown Prince and Princess to his side, and the Princess was already beginning to speak of an alliance between Germany and England. Disraeli's imperialistic colonial policy was commented on in the politest terms in the German Government Press. Victoria was indeed without subtlety and would perhaps have been caught in the seductive snares, but at her side she now had a man who knew and practised Oriental statecraft all too well to be deceived by that of Germany.

In 1877 Bismarck made his boldest attempt to win England. The unrest in the Far East served him for a pretext to offer Egypt to England. The Crown Princess acted as proposer of the scheme. Disraeli understood instantly that Bismarck's intention was to detach England from France. If England at that moment had annexed Egypt the indignation in France would have grown so strong that a breach with England would have become inevitable. When France should be isolated the moment for the preventive war would have come. Victoria wrote a very sharp letter to her daughter, declined on her country's behalf to consider the suggestion and made it clear that Bismarck was seen through, the whole being seasoned with some rather offensive moral reflections. Bismarck's attempt to isolate France had hopelessly miscarried.

Disraeli's diplomatic triumphs during the Berlin Congress, where, behind the back of Bismarck, he brought about an agreement with Russia, lay outside Victoria's sphere of action, and the final phase in the struggle against Bismarck belongs to a later period than that which occupies us. But the

transactions with which we are concerned and in which Victoria so passionately took part speak plainly. Her policy, seen from the English point of view, was both dignified and wise. She was Edward VII's mother. One seeks in vain for blundering or boasting in the confidential correspondence with her daughter and the other German relatives. To a much greater extent than was believed it is to Queen Victoria's personal credit that Bismarck to the last encountered a resistance which he could not overcome. She succeeded in making herself the centre of the circle of the European monarchs, and in it she was beyond doubt the most imposing figure.

She was not highly gifted; her education was rather superficial. But she had in the highest degree the aristocratic attribute which is called common-sense. She had no wide outlook, no deep or lofty ideas. Her perception of what lay far off, both in time and space, was dim. But she saw and she understood what lay near, she knew what the moment demanded. This quality is perhaps of the highest importance, and it is far from common. According to the intellectuals—and their not so intellectual admirers—it is the sin against the Holy Ghost to say to the present and to reality: "*Verweile doch, du bist so schon.*" This sin—reputed or actual—was the foundation of Victoria's being. She loved the present, she was fond of the day which *was*—even, or rather especially, when it involved nothing but the ordinary worry of monotonous affairs of State. Habit and routine, known duties, known faces—that was what she preferred. Actually it was for this reason that she understood and judged the many questions of the day more

accurately than many who intellectually were incomparably her superiors.

Victoria's indisputable and rare wisdom—this word is the truest description of her best qualities—accords also with the position which she held, not by right of conquest but by right of birth. As a girl of eighteen she had discussed questions of high policy familiarly and as a matter of course. Astute statesmen when they have arrived at the heights of power have a long climb behind them; their natural outlook has been limited and warped by many a long year of vain and ardent ambition, by party considerations and class prejudices, by longing and dreams, and when the goal is reached they are already tired men. Where men of genius like Disraeli and Bismarck stood dazzled, there Victoria watched with calm and untroubled eyes. She judged the problems of world history with the same matter-of-fact calm which another woman devotes to the day's household duties. At once experienced, just, self-confident and simple, she preserved a freshness and an unclouded judgment which the great and astute politicians have lost during their long battle for the leading place in the sun. Victoria symbolised the merits of the Monarchical form of Government.

In letters to her Ministers she can disclose an insight and a freedom from prejudice which would be amazing if one met it in an established political reputation. She can, for instance, in speaking of the High Church party, write that the aim of the Ritualistic movement was to form one church for the rich and another for the poor. One starts with amazement; none of the great English statesmen could have been expected to see so far beyond all

phrases and formulæ. But the explanation is in fact this, that Victoria by reason of her birth was free from the most unreasonable of all human prejudices, that which attaches exclusively to upper or lower class. She alone belonged to neither; she was Queen of England and high above the otherwise universal class distinctions of wealth. She could see deeper into the national financial consequences of an economic project than Gladstone. When the great humanitarian and Liberal statesman wished to bring forward his match duty, Victoria protested because it was calculated to shift further the burden of taxation from the shoulders of the rich to those of the poor. One smiles at her naïve old-fashioned faith; it did not prevent her from showing more freedom from prejudice on religious questions than if she had shared the agnosticism or broadmindedness of so-called modern Christians. Despite her Puritanical sympathies she was able to judge the Catholic Church more calmly and positively than, for instance, Gladstone or Disraeli; despite her orthodoxy she had nothing but admiration for the hated Bishop Colenso. With all his contempt for theorists and ideologues Disraeli did not venture to withhold his support from the projected North Pole expeditions; no cry of the value of truth for its own sake could prevent Victoria from declaring that polar expeditions were nothing but a sacrifice of human life upon the altar of vanity and uselessness. She judged mankind with decision and outspokenly, without the smallest consideration of official distinctions. In half an hour she had weighed Thomas Carlyle with a certainty and precision which literary historians might well envy; his literary merits and

faults she refrained from judging, but she immediately summed up the man. With a similar freedom from prejudice she appreciated uneducated and obscure Scottish peasants in the Highlands when she spoke to them of their dear ones, of their homes, of the joy of harvest and of the power of death. Illiterate as she was, she has written about Dickens the justest words that have been said on the subject.

Of Victoria's greatest human fault, avarice, one easily finds traces in these for the most part purely political letters. But one must not forget that this fault is associated with a quality which is not without value. Victoria had indeed a strong inclination to provide for her family and herself as many economic advantages as possible. But she had an equal desire to provide as well as possible for nearly everyone she knew and valued. It seems to be a characteristic of the family; her sons have the same peculiarity. They wish at any cost to procure for their teachers and tutors remunerative appointments; when Prince Leopold lay seriously ill he glowed with pleasure when he came to hear that his old tutor, after much intriguing in high quarters, had obtained a first-class living. The Windsor family as a whole may certainly be regarded as having marked instincts for self-preservation, but this in some ways is associated with their fidelity to all with whom they come in contact. Victoria related once to Lord Melbourne that when, as a child, she was away on a visit she had the habit of praising and admiring all she saw in the hope that it would be given to her. In no case is this instinct in conflict with her solicitude about everything which in any sense belonged to

her; most plainly marked, in these letters, is her extraordinary considerateness for her numerous household.

Victoria's conservatism was combined with much obstinacy and many prejudices. But her respect for actuality was even greater than her strong devotion to established opinions and principles; it appeared throughout all her German policy, in which sober observation in the end overcame the call of blood and her strong faith in Albert's incomparable authority. Even though her somewhat Byzantine exactions of etiquette and outward decorum may by some be characterised as prejudice, yet it must be borne in mind that the majestic Queen possessed a humanity which knew neither race nor class prejudices and which roused her to protest with the same indignation against the English policy of reprisals against natives as against that of the Germans in France.

During the idyllic years by the side of Albert, Victoria gave herself up to a cult of philistinism which often provoked ridicule. Lytton Strachey has sketched it with his exquisite irony, and the less respectful among her contemporary subjects even satirised it in wicked verses :

> " O Halbert, 'appy Prince,
> With children round your knees,
> Hengraving 'andsome prints
> And taking of your ease."

This somewhat lightly bought contentment did not remain with the Widow of Windsor; the smile had been removed from an expression generally rather sour. The days went by, grey in unbroken monotony. Her subjects did not approve the

retirement, especially as it was combined with a great lack of hospitality, particularly noticeable when some foreign sovereign visited England. People whispered—and sometimes spoke out loud—of less creditable reasons for this disposition to isolate herself.

There was truth in much of the criticism but never the whole truth. For Victoria had become so accustomed to regular working hours and to retirement that any variation actually threw her nerves out of balance; thus she became almost ill with agitation when she was to open Parliament or otherwise to appear in public.

But behind the scenes she was active. She read the long despatches of the Ministers, wrote and dictated all day long. The only pleasures she cared about were excursions with her children or other relatives and favourite attendants and beloved old faithful servants and spoiled dogs. She was particularly pleased by demonstrations of appreciation; her delight in the friendly reception which her descriptions of Highland life obtained is really touching. As time passed, reasons for sorrow increased; for death often made new gaps in the large family connection. But though Victoria each time was inwardly touched—her sympathies were wide—she bore the blows with a resignation for which she had her genuine and warm religion to thank.

One begins to read the extensive literature about Victoria from interest in the Queen, who during her long life securely and quietly filled her place as the most highly placed and best known personage on earth except the Pope, and around whom the history of the world moved as about a centre.

But one soon forgets the Queen for the woman, for the human being. One sees a short stout lady with a somewhat haughty mien, who has (not indeed always very profound) opinions about everything ready once for all, an original, living human being who regarded the world with calm eyes, who took her bearings from reality and, in her practical way, steered the greatest domain which anyone had yet commanded. She was at the same time Sovereign lady and citizen's wife, with the limitations of both, but also with the merits of both. In some of her most attractive and most typical qualities she perhaps resembles more than anyone else one of her granddaughters whose memory is dear and familiar to us Swedes.

III

EDWARD VII

THE official biography of King Edward, written by Sir Sidney Lee, the first part of which has just appeared, is executed on a large scale. The first volume is exclusively devoted to the exalted personage's lengthy education for the position which he was to fill, and there are eight hundred and forty-three pages of it. But one nevertheless reads the bulky volume with interest and excitement. It portrays a personality captivating in spite of everything, and, as Prince of Wales, King Edward was already one of the leading figures of high politics. His biography has an interest beyond that of his personal history. All who wish to form a conception of European politics during the last decades of the nineteenth century will find in this book about the then Prince of Wales an abundant source of information.

Lee's book is written by command of King George V. Its official character naturally sets its stamp upon it. On the whole the task has suited Sidney Lee admirably, and he has performed it with taste. The well-known English historian has never been a very deep psychologist, he has never been either a thinker or an artist. But he has the ideal qualifications for official historiography, experience and tact. An official biography must

be both true and untrue. It must not contain any inaccurate statements, but neither must it display any tendency to examine at all deeply into the psychology of the subject under discussion. It must always tell the truth but never the whole truth.

This man whom Germans describe, not without reason, as the most dangerous enemy their country has possessed, was born of a German father and throughout spoke his mother tongue with a German accent. A rather dry idealist, a methodical theorist and at the same time something of an artist and something of a pedant, such was King Edward's father. The mother, Queen Victoria, was, in her bourgeoise narrow-mindedness, one of the most vigorous and sterling persons who have ever held a sceptre, obstinate, kind-hearted, pure-hearted, limited, resolute, overbearing, wise, loyal, conservative, English to the finger-tips. The son did not seem to resemble either of his parents.

As a child he was educated entirely according to his father's prescription. It was a curious prescription. The child was to be brought up to be a model person and a model king, and Prince Albert believed that the ideal was to be found in books, and that reality was evil. To this end the boy was debarred from all companionship other than that of books. He met no one of his own age; he was never allowed to make a friend. Under the direction of strict mentors the day passed in the schoolroom in studies and in toil. The boy had no head for learning, and the father was terribly distressed because the future king's essays on moral and philosophical questions betrayed neither depth of thought, brilliancy of style, originality

nor aptitude for study. Early educational tours were frequently undertaken, and diaries would be carried in which the boy had to record his impressions of the ruins of Rome or of the character of the landscape in various countries. The boy's archæological interests seemed to be small. Prince Albert was in despair.

Prince Metternich met the young Prince of Wales. The old connoisseur of human nature declared that never before had he seen so resigned and dismal an air in a boy of seventeen. For the truth was that the Prince of Wales hated books and ideas and principles and music and art just as fervently as his father loved them all.

There are two kinds of people on this earth: those who interest themselves in the world as it ought to be and those who interest themselves in the world as it is—those who live in the world of imagination and those who live in that of actuality. There are good and bad people of both sorts, but the idealist and the man of the world always have difficulty in understanding one another.

King Edward belonged to that section of humanity which interests itself in the world as it is. In childhood he was only allowed to hear about the world as it ought to be, and the question interested him not at all. When Prince Albert died his young son was set free. He was able to turn from books to people. As a grown man he hardly ever opened a book, but neglected no opportunity to learn from people.

King Edward was human in all senses of the word, both creditable and not so creditable. Concerning the less creditable sides enough has been said, and that King Edward was a pleasure-seeker

is one of those truths which are too well known to call for repetition. Most people are pleasure-seekers, and many of those who have had most to say about it were, in their hearts, thankful enough that, unlike King Edward, they were of a station in life which permitted them to enjoy themselves without its being recorded in the newspapers of the day. On the other hand, others of King Edward's qualities are less common: his unpretentiousness, his humanity, his amiability and intelligence. He was tired of his father's long sermons, but it was something more than a chance mood which led him to burst into tears when, on his eighteenth birthday, he received a letter from his mother in which she reminded him that his first great duty in life was not to love himself more than his neighbour. He was a singularly loyal friend; to those who once gained his affection or did him a kindness he held fast in all weathers, a trait which at times placed him in very awkward situations. He was absolutely free from over-estimation of himself and seems never even to have suspected that he might possess some remarkable qualities. He was chivalrous and noble, courageous and unprejudiced. Consequently he was a great politician, the foremost royal diplomat that Europe has possessed in modern times.

King Edward's years of apprenticeship were many. He was fifty-nine when he succeeded to the throne, and it was not until he reached the fifties that his mother really allowed him any influence. As it was, the Prince's time appeared to be employed as uselessly as possible. To be a mere figure-head, just to eat dinners and to travel, seemed to be his only occupations. He dined and

played cards with British statesmen and foreign diplomats in London. Amiable and smiling, he sat for the most part silent and let his entourage do the talking. He would be telling a trivial little anecdote. Beside him the Foreign Secretary was in colloquy with the French Ambassador. The Prince suddenly became silent—out of courtesy naturally—no one could observe from his calm, aristocratically impassive face that he felt any interest in the conversation to which he listened. But years afterwards it appeared that the Prince remembered every word that was uttered. At another time he went up to the German Ambassador and began, with polite indifference, to talk about politics. The German Ambassador delivered himself of a lengthy discourse and the Prince looked entirely vacant. God be praised, thought the Ambassador, who feared that he had said too much. But not one word escaped the young Prince, to all appearance so indifferent. He travelled round the world time after time. He met the world's most influential men, and would begin rather frivolously to discuss the latest fashions or the newest farce. Elderly statesmen found it more amusing to talk politics, and the Prince immediately gave way. He didn't puzzle his brains about what they said, not in the least, he listened out of pure courtesy and threw in jocular observations. But not one inflection of their voices had this calm and cool brain omitted to register. And he was the same with the dullest of his contemporary princes. He learned to know them through and through. He was equally amiable, however foolishly they babbled, and passed off their high-political confidences with a jest. But he forgot nothing.

That is the education of a man of the world, and King Edward became a man of the world. His training was first-rate. His strongest passion, the passion for play, taught him a good deal. He dedicated himself to the ethics of play, which certainly are not particularly sublime, but are all the more useful for that; he taught himself not to allow a look, not the least movement of a muscle in his face to betray his feelings, which is not altogether an easy art when a man is losing more than he can conveniently pay. He often paid his compliments behind the scenes at the theatre and, even if his relations with the beauties of the ballet were more amusing than profitable, he nevertheless encountered both princes and diplomats in the same locality, who at that time of night were quite outspoken about affairs of which in the morning they would not have dared to breathe. And he counted among his friends England's greatest statesmen, a Disraeli no less than a Gladstone; and in the course of long conversations he learned to know not only their experiences but themselves as well. As the years went by he acquired a knowledge of mankind and their aims such as diligent studies in a library could never have given him. He knew how one should win mankind, how one should provoke and stimulate them, how one should penetrate their designs and how defeat them.

He had not many ideas of his own, he was not a clearly defined personality; no man of the world is that. He liked what a gentleman ought to like, but did not reflect about his preferences. He went to church and took the sacrament because that is what one does. He went to concerts for the same

reason. He was not in the least original. He was not a great man, but he was a great diplomat.

As for political ideas he had none. He was neither Whig nor Tory. If he ever took up a question of Home Politics it was usually on humanitarian grounds, as when he worked for old age pensions or when, after his Indian travels, blazing with indignation, he sought to remove the English officers who had behaved brutally to the natives. His particular interest was Foreign policy, and in that sphere he was a master. Nor had he any original ideas as a diplomat. He seems from the very beginning to have had an intense aversion from anything which could be called Russian—and this is not to be wondered at, for no one has ever been more Western than King Edward. Had he followed his own impulses he would have worked for a thoroughgoing Anti-Russian policy, a great coalition of the Western Powers against the huge Empire of the East. But King Edward was not one of those who follow their impulses. The direction of English Foreign policy was determined by England's interest in this or that concrete situation, and in reality King Edward was nothing but England's most skilful and loyally patriotic diplomat. The lines were determined by statesmen in the Cabinet, and it was according to those lines that King Edward regulated his plans.

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed the greatest alteration which English policy underwent; the Kingdom of England passed into the background and the British Empire stepped into its place. That did not happen without violent and sudden coups; now by guile, now by violence, France and Russia were outmanœuvred in Asia and

Africa. Russia was led by the nose at the Congress of Berlin. France was tricked over both Egypt and the Sudan. It was Disraeli who beat time and staged the audacious performances. King Edward's rôle was not less important; he followed and applied balsam to the wounds. He talked in Petersburg occasionally, he talked in Paris very often, and England escaped Napoleon's fate of meeting one hostile coalition after another. England expanded and grew far more powerful and more gigantic than Germany, but while Germany collected enemies, England collected friends and mercenaries. The credit was in no small measure King Edward's. His flattery meant more than anyone else's. His amiability and powers of persuasion were irresistible. Sidney Lee in this volume of his biography has only sketched the beginning of King Edward's diplomatic career, but it was already significant enough. In this connection we shall only touch upon one of its episodes, partly because its interest is unusually great, partly because its import is so fundamentally misunderstood by Sir Sidney Lee. It concerns King Edward's relation with his nephew in Berlin, Kaiser Wilhelm.

I have already mentioned that an official biography must always be discreet. This is generally the case, but in one detail Lee's book breaks with the tradition. It is on the question of Kaiser Wilhelm, whose most intimate private letters are made public with complete unscrupulousness.

For this, naturally, the World War is to blame. Kaiser Wilhelm is now for all time an entirely outlawed person. Consequently the section of the book which deals with the German Emperor's

relations with England is the most piquant and, from the historical point of view, the most valuable.

Sir Sidney Lee's view of the German Emperor is unfortunately the old commonplace from the war years. The letters are made public with the purpose and intention of representing the Kaiser as the wicked robber who threatens the nice little English boys, a robber who is at the same time stupid and cunning. It is surprising that an intelligent Englishman does not see that this story is not only erroneous but also not very creditable to his own country. Fortunately the letters tell their own tale irrespective of Sir Sidney's commentaries, and they show that in reality King Edward and the English diplomats played quite another rôle, less sentimental but fundamentally very much worthier and more manly. It was, in fact, not King Edward who was the sheep, but Kaiser Wilhelm. The story of their mutual relations is the story of how the man of the world crushes the visionary.

Kaiser Wilhelm was—or rather is, though it is difficult to believe it—a man not interested in the world as it is, but in the world as it ought to be. This is not to say that he was in the least a man of great ideas. The world of imagination in which he lived was divorced from reality, above all by the fact that it revolved around himself as a centre. He was not a bad man, he was not even without gifts, but he was something of a fool. He saw everything as he wanted it to be, nothing as it was. He could never control an impulse. It is ridiculous to make him out the genius of evil on the ground that he exhorted his troops during the Boxer rising to take the Huns for their example; that is nothing but

childish bragging. His roaring and threats are not to be taken more seriously than his belief that he was a latter-day Parsifal. Sidney Lee believes that he is a polished Machiavellist. It is astonishing that the letters made public in the book on King Edward should have failed to convince even the most fanatical that Kaiser Wilhelm was Machiavelli's opposite: an idle rhetorical chatterbox, easily tricked for all his unscrupulousness and with a certain kindliness underlying his incivility. The only misfortune was that he had the weal and woe of the German Empire in his clumsy hands.

Sir Sidney asserts time after time in the most emphatic tone that Kaiser Wilhelm hated England like the plague. The published documents show, on the contrary, that Carnegie was altogether right when he said that Kaiser Wilhelm was unhappily in love with everything English. He talked all the time of his childhood's memories of Osborne and Balmoral as the most radiant of his life. He was beside himself with delight over a Highland costume which he once obtained; he had himself immediately photographed in the picturesque garb and sent copies to all his friends. He dreamed of Nelson and Roberts and was as polite to the English aristocracy as he was rude to the German.

He wrote his many letters in English. He admired King Edward and imitated him as well as he could. Changeable and suspicious as he was, these feelings were capable of being suddenly changed in a fit of temper, but when the storm abated he drew in his claws.

There was, however, in Germany one man who was England's enemy in earnest and that was Bismarck. He worked for a coalition with Russia

and worked against English interests wherever he could. During one stage of his life Kaiser Wilhelm was a tool in the Chancellor's hands. Bismarck regarded the Emperor Frederick's fondness for England with aversion, and even more so the affection which his English Consort never concealed for her old fatherland and her antipathy to her new. That was why he skilfully detached Kaiser Wilhelm from his father and brought him into enmity with his mother. By this means Germany was to be rescued from English influence and Bismarck himself to decide her course. In the beginning everything went according to plan. With the death of the Emperor Frederick the breach between Kaiser Wilhelm and his mother became as complete as possible, and Queen Victoria and King Edward were furious about the insulting treatment to which their daughter and sister was subjected. Bismarck's victory seemed complete, and Kaiser Wilhelm's friendship for Russia and his anglophobia knew no bounds.

But then came the revulsion. Naturally this is not mentioned in the book, but with a little penetration one can guess what happened: Bismarck encountered an unknown antagonist and, without himself knowing how it occurred, unseen hands seized him and hurled him into the abyss and his policy with him. Kaiser Wilhelm stood alone in the arena, but—I believe one may venture to assert it—behind the scenes worked the then Prince of Wales.

In 1889 Kaiser Wilhelm was invited to Osborne. Up till then the rupture between him and his English relatives had been as complete as possible; during the short time he had been Emperor he had

time and again contrived to insult the heir to the English throne, who cordially disliked him in return. But Edward did not act upon impulse. In England the Kaiser was received with effusive good-will, flattery was laid on thick and marks of honour succeeded one another. The whole was crowned by the appointment of Kaiser Wilhelm as an admiral of the British fleet. "It is enough to make me mad with joy," he wrote. He became a member of the most aristocratic clubs, and Edward was his constant cicerone, always uniformly entertaining and attentive. Harmony became complete. Private discussions were held, and as soon as the Kaiser reached Berlin he began preparations to return the hospitality. The day for the reception was fixed for the 21st March, 1890. The Prince of Wales arrived accompanied by his son and was received with overwhelming pomp and state. But on March 19th—two days before the arrival of the Prince of Wales—the Kaiser had written a letter to Bismarck the contents of which are well known. Can one really help connecting the two occurrences? It is true that Bismarck took the opportunity to give a luncheon for the Prince's suite, for the purpose of thoroughly denigrating Kaiser Wilhelm to them, and finally the Prince of Wales himself visited the fallen giant. Did he enjoy his triumph? If that were so, he did not let a look betray it. But Bismarck's downfall was England's salvation at that moment and, if it were—as is probable—to some extent the work of Edward, he has never done his country a greater service. Kaiser Wilhelm himself made no secret about whom it was that he thought to please by the coup. He telegraphed immediately to Queen Victoria about

his exploit, and his cordiality towards his hitherto hated uncle knew no bounds. But Bismarck himself does not seem to have surmised who stood behind. That was now Edward's great talent; he never appeared.

The sequel was to go on in the same fashion. There were plenty of ruptures between the man of the world in London and the visionary in Berlin, but though Kaiser Wilhelm piled tactlessness upon tactlessness, it is difficult to find a single occasion when he did not draw the shortest straw. During the Boer war he had his greatest chance. Russia and France were exceedingly exasperated by England. Kaiser Wilhelm babbled all over the place, but the end of it was that he succeeded in directing the animosity of Russia and France against Germany instead of against England, and thus became so isolated that he was obliged to draw in his claws and seek by every means to come to terms with the English Government. The credit was King Edward's to a far greater extent than may be suspected. Usually it is the lot of the Ministers to smooth over and retrieve the mistakes of the monarchs; here, for once, it was the other way round.

It is difficult to understand the indignation of Englishmen against Kaiser Wilhelm. The old man now sits in tranquillity, chiefly occupied with an unrequited devotion for the present Prince of Wales, but the rancour of Sir Sidney Lee and other gentlemen is unabated. In any case it is manifest that the German visionary succeeded in isolating not England but Germany. He steered the German ship of State with his gaze fixed on the moon, and never thought of consulting the chart. That it

lasted as long as it did was no credit to him; it was due to the marvellously solid construction of the ship.

But if one regards the matter purely from a personal standpoint the victory of the man of the world over the visionary is just. King Edward was not only intellectually the superior of his adversary, but even morally, in so far as patriotism, loyalty, self-command and willingness to sacrifice his own interests for the good of the State are moral virtues.

It was through these qualities that King Edward won his enduring diplomatic successes; they are essential qualifications even for the victories of finesse and, whatever King Edward's policy may have meant for Europe as a whole, he has a claim to the gratitude of his people.

IV

WILHELM II

EMIL LUDWIG'S book *Wilhelm der Zweite* has had a sale in Germany of nearly 125,000 copies and has been translated into the other great languages of civilisation; it has also been published in Swedish. Its success is not surprising; the topic is fascinating, and Ludwig's book is without the least doubt one of the best written which for a long time has seen the light in Germany. The impression which it makes is strong, almost intolerable. It reminds one of Strindberg's chamber plays: Wilhelm II, the Bismarcks, father and son, Waldersee, Holstein, Eulenburg and Bülow play together in an appalling tragedy and, at the fall of the curtain, nothing is heard but the cries and groans of the afflicted German people. In this ghastly dance of death there are no human faces, only terrifying and contorted masks. It is one of the most grisly books that have ever been written.

Æsthetically it is extraordinarily effective, but sober critics have in one way and another plenty to object to in Ludwig's presentation. A part of his protrait differs very materially from the original; no one, for instance, who has read the letters of the Empress Victoria, can possibly accept all that Ludwig has to say about Wilhelm II's mother.

The chief figure of the book, Wilhelm II himself,

is drawn from the descriptions of his friends, and that is a tainted source, for it is by his enemies that a man may sometimes most justly be judged, and, if the judgment of his friends is to be accounted final, he is as a rule to be pitied. This applied particularly in the case of Wilhelm II; history knows few more repulsive spectacles than the manner in which statesmen and generals who, in the days of the German Emperor's power, crept in the dust before his feet, after his fall made haste to try to rid themselves of responsibility for all the catastrophes which had occurred. Kaiser Wilhelm has become the convenient scapegoat; during the war the opinion of the world gave him the blame for actions which he tried his best to prevent, and since the peace the German Ministers and commanders have taken the *entente* propaganda as their model.

It is really almost in pure self-defence that Wilhelm II begins the publication of his memoirs. If it has been his object to show that his former friends' picture of him is not a true one, he has undoubtedly succeeded. The man who wrote *Memories of Youth* is by no means identical with Ludwig's Wilhelm der Zweite. It is, of course, evident that one can only provisionally take for gospel all that the fugitive at Doorn has to say; the unusually mild and rather colourless tone of *Memories of Youth* is scarcely natural to Wilhelm II. But eight years of exile have perhaps changed him, and there is hardly anything in his book which rings actually false, nothing at variance with what one already knows to be founded on fact. He depicts his youth as an idyll, speaks, throughout, well of his entourage and tries to avoid or to smooth over dissensions. Actually Wilhelm II's youth was the

reverse of an idyll: it was tragic, and the tragedy had consequences which affected the history of the world. But one need not be a very acute psychologist in order to be able to read between the lines of a book like this, and, read aright, *Memories of Youth* is one of the best sources of information about Kaiser Wilhelm. But it is an incomplete text and ought to be amplified by another; the author of the book has hardly desired it, but in actual fact it is possible, with due care, to fit into their appropriate context in these tranquil memoirs the less tranquil letters to his English and Russian relatives which have appeared elsewhere. Wilhelm II is not greatly concerned to be fully understood, but in the end he stands fully revealed, and actually he is more to be pitied than blamed.

Of the three German Emperors the last is personally the most interesting and in all respects the most gifted. That is not saying much. The old Emperor Wilhelm I was a man of no importance; he was quite simple, vain, kindly and parsimonious. His consort the Empress Augusta was not only gifted; she was a very attractive and cultivated personality and represented the noblest traditions of German culture. She was, however, quite without influence over her husband, who, in spite of opposition, allowed himself ultimately to be guided by Bismarck's will, and Bismarck was a stranger to the Weimar influences. Their son, the Emperor Frederick, had inherited his mother's liberal views and humane interests; his mental endowments were his father's. His life was passed in frustrated longing for power, and in history he is a shadow. He was never anything more than his wife's husband.

His wife, the Empress Victoria, was, on the other hand, a very notable woman. To a remarkable degree she took after her mother, Queen Victoria of England; she inherited her strenuous temperament and her capacity for strong feelings, but not her practical sagacity, her profound humanity or her happily harmonious nature. The mother of Wilhelm II was, however, the image of her father. Albert, the Prince Consort, was an unusual personality; intelligent, highly cultivated, rather erudite, restlessly active and ambitious almost to the point of disease. His life was somewhat tragic; in England he was considered a foreigner and his craving for power was for the most part disappointed, above all by the solid, nonchalant and thoroughly English Palmerston, who considered himself capable of governing England without help from "those people at Osborne." When Albert married his beloved eldest daughter to the Crown Prince of Prussia, it was in the hope that a fate very different from that which she suffered was in store for her in his native land.

The fate of the Empress Victoria was, however, only a repetition of her father's tragedy. In Germany she became a foreigner, and her humanitarian and liberal ideas were met by the all-powerful Bismarck with a shrug of the shoulders. She gathered artists and scholars around her, she worked for the poor and displayed a great and beneficent social activity, but she was shut off from political power. She was regarded with coldness; though she was not in the least English—from her head to her heels she was a true Coburg—she was looked upon in Berlin as a foreign spy, one whom it was necessary to render harmless. Her formal loyalty towards her

new country, which is evident to everyone who has read her lovable and brilliant letters, was universally called in question. She waited and waited for the longed-for moment when she would become Empress. She grew reticent and embittered; she came to regard her native land as a lost Paradise. Her one pleasure lay in her happy married life, but for her proud, restless, power-loving nature that pleasure was not enough.

The eldest son, Wilhelm, resembled her in many respects. He was frail and delicate, but he early displayed both capacity and ambition. His mother was only eighteen when he was born; without doubt she expected to find in him some compensation for the disappointments and sorrows which she had had to endure. The child was brought up on English principles, not only in the English spirit of hygiene and sport, then totally unknown and decidedly held suspect in Germany, but also in other ways which were complained of on the ground that the little Wilhelm would not develop into an "old Prussian." The mother succeeded to the extent that her son did not become in the least Prussian. It was, however, not her own fault that she had only this negative success.

Wilhelm II's early childhood was happy. He often stayed in England, and throughout his life was accustomed to say that the memories of Osborne and Balmoral were his only really happy ones. In his grandmother's palace the little boy could play and enjoy himself; none but friendly faces surrounded him, and his uncles and aunts vied with one another in spoiling him. If he had been good during the course of the day his grandmother sometimes gave him a sovereign in the evening, and he

was allowed to eat as much as he liked at dessert. The last time he was at Windsor, in the year 1912, when many decades of enmity with his English relatives lay behind him, he wrote a rather pathetic letter to Bethmann-Hollweg. "I had," he wrote, "my parents' room at Windsor Castle, a room in which I have often played as a child. There were many memories which filled my heart. They woke anew my old feeling for home which attaches me so firmly to this place and which for me personally makes the consciousness of the political development of the last years so hard to bear. I am proud that this place is my other home and that I am a member of this Royal House." But he continues with this phrase at once grotesque and tenderly melancholy: "*Auch fand ich noch einen Platz in der Erinnerung, wo Ich als Kind infolge des vielen Puddingessens mich kolossal übergeben habe.*" It is impossible to understand Kaiser Wilhelm unless one bears in mind that it was in England and not in Germany that he felt himself happiest. Prussia's last King was fundamentally an alien in his country.

When the little Prince grew somewhat older the happiness came to a sudden end. His tutor, Hinzpeter, was a very excellent man and worthy of the esteem with which he is spoken of in *Memories of Youth*. But for a frail and nervous child he was not the right pedagogue. Hard and joyless work and exacting athletic training from morning till night was the daily programme; commendation and rewards there were none and, when the wretched child gave a party for his cousins, he, as host, to prove his stoicism, was obliged to abstain from the longed-for cakes, while his guests of the same age gorged themselves to their hearts' content. Kaiser

Wilhelm's uncle, Edward VII, was brought up after something of the same Spartan method, but his was a sound and harmonious nature and soon recovered from the strain. Wilhelm retained through life an intense hatred for work and effort. His unfortunate indolence may surely at least partly be explained as a reaction against the inflictions of his childhood's years, and in any case it was under Hinzpeter that the foundations were laid of the nervous debility and chronic timidity which he never overcame.

After the English fashion Wilhelm II's parents wished to send their son to an ordinary school. The experiment was not successful. Others have given an account of the Prince's overbearing manner and contempt for his comrades; he himself conveys in his memoirs how ludicrous and contemptible the over-crammed and absent-minded German schoolboys seemed compared with the aristocratic young men of the world at Eton. At Cassel the princely schoolboy found no comrades, but only subjects. His parents wished to correct the mistake when he had passed, not very brilliantly, his final examination, and to send him to Oxford, where the young nobility have no social grounds for feeling themselves inferior to Royalty. That this would have been satisfactory for Prince Wilhelm there is no possible doubt; the plan, however, came to nothing, for now another power intervened in the life of Wilhelm II which made him what he became later.

There is no doubt that Bismarck saw with displeasure Germany's future Emperor brought up as an Englishman. It was only unfortunate that they could not separate the Prince from English influence

without at the same time separating him from his parents and practically from everything which was naturally and really himself. But Bismarck was not prepared to pay regard to the psychology of a nervous young man, and his programme was formulated with all desirable lucidity by Herbert Bismarck: "*Gegen England kann Prinz Wilhelm niemals genug aufgehetzt werden.*" Wilhelm II's mother had only succeeded in preventing her son from becoming Prussian; the result of Bismarck's efforts was equally negative.

The only bitterness which one can trace in Wilhelm II's *Memories of Youth* concerns Bismarck. He holds that the enmity with his parents was entirely Bismarck's fault and not his own; it may perhaps be objected that, when he accepted a position which he knew must affront his father, he seems to have done so not altogether unwillingly. But it is idle in a case of this kind to dispute about the blame; the fact remains that at the age of twenty-two Wilhelm II had already radically broken with the *milieu* to which he belonged by heredity and upbringing. Such breaches often bring about dangerous consequences for him who undergoes them; they can be remedied if one reaches a new anchorage, but Wilhelm II's misfortune was that he never succeeded in finding any such.

What Bismarck had to build upon was partly the young Prince's ambition, partly his patriotism. The former had no foundation of self-sacrifice or capacity for work and effort. The latter was of a kind which Bismarck had no disposition to appreciate. There were dreams of the Holy Roman Empire which even the Emperor Frederick nourished, though his consort prevented them from

being put into action. There was pride of birth and jealousy of the English relatives. But there was no familiarity with the authentic Prussian traditions. Bismarck succeeded in making Wilhelm II a militarist but he failed to make him a soldier. The enthusiast for uniforms was fundamentally a civilian; he thoroughly enjoyed the parades but detested the hardships of camp life and was afraid of its dangers. The King of Prussia was a lover of ease like his forbears of the House of Hanover; that aspect of the Prussian tradition which demanded tenacity, patient fulfilment of duty and courage was entirely unknown to him. Prussianism with Wilhelm II was nothing but a mask.

The mask not only disfigured him, he was also uncomfortable in it. One element in his hatred for Bismarck was a feeling of personal discomfort in the company of the powerful Junker similar to that which later tormented him in intercourse with Ludendorff. He relates in *Memories of Youth* that after dinner Bismarck was in the habit of reclining on a sofa and letting him light his pipe for him; he made no comment, but one safely surmises that Wilhelm II felt that the position ought to be reversed. He got on neither with chancery business nor military training; when in the evenings he sat in the Mess with a simple pot of beer he found it hard to forget the dinner which was being served at the same time to the Prince of Wales. Nor was his family life happy. Germany's last Empress was well behaved and virtuous, but she was silly, tiresome and without style, and her husband avoided her company as much as possible.

The best that can happen to a man is to discover the rule of life and then to follow it unswervingly.

The fate of Wilhelm II is the classical example of what happens to him who never finds this rule of life, who is without anchorage. The instability of Wilhelm II's emotional life beggars description. That was his greatest misfortune. His vacillations, which are the most characteristic feature of his policy, are only an expression of a complete ignorance of what he himself fundamentally wanted. His unrest and nervousness seem at times to border upon pure hysteria. The uncertainty found expression at one moment as offensive arrogance, at the next as submissiveness and fawning.

His attitude to whatever was uppermost in his mind may be likened to that of the unhappy lover; the pendulum of his emotional life swung backwards and forwards between love and hate. It was so with his attitude to Prussianism and militarism; at one moment he is full of romantic enthusiasm and an almost feminine tenderness for the Prussian warlike spirit, at the next he swings over to liberalism and humanitarian pacifism. Throughout life he sought friends but he found none. He was perpetually on the way to find the ideal, but it was perpetually transformed to something unsympathetic which he sought to thrust away from him. His incessant tours in his railway carriage corresponded with his incapacity to find peace, to find any fixed point for his will and his feelings.

It seems as if one could deduce—at least in some measure—the dissension in Wilhelm II's inner life from the circumstances in which he grew up. It was too much to be, at the same time, the Empress Victoria's son and Bismarck's pupil, the inheritance and the task were too jarringly incongruous. He

was full of strong feelings which could not but tear him asunder.

This internal dissension shows itself most plainly in his relations with his English relatives. When Bismarck's influence was at its height, about 1885, he could write to Alexander III a letter in which his mother and her family are spoken of in terms which are positively appalling. He is equally sincere when in a letter to his grandmother he gives utterance to an enraptured anglomania. During the Boer war he was sincerely delighted by England's reverses and caused as much irritation as he could. In the intervals of intriguing against England he dreamed about the best method to help the English in South Africa, and drew up plans of campaign, unwelcome and foolish, but well-meaning, which he sent to London in the hope of winning commendation. In *Memories of Youth* he speaks understandingly and sympathetically about his mother; there is no doubt that he was fond of her. This did not prevent him from hating her at some moments and embittering her life. Kaiser Wilhelm's tendencies are of interest rather for the pathologist than for the moralist.

He often had sound opinions. He was in the right against Bismarck both on the industrial question and on the Church question. The criticism which, in *Memories of Youth*, he devotes to Bismarck's Russian policy is also probably just. He could be winning and lovable; typically enough he showed these qualities in his intercourse with Englishmen, and Lord Haldane and Lord Morley had an entirely different impression of his personality from that of his German entourage. He could bear frank speech and resolute criticism; it was not his fault that all

his rashnesses and whims were met only by servile flattery. It is tragic that a man with these qualifications and in the incomparable position which he occupied should have accomplished nothing which can be characterised as positively good.

There is one feature of Wilhelm II's *Memories of Youth* which strikes one at first with surprise: its shallowness. This shallowness has a sort of merit: it has enabled him to forget the humiliations, the treachery and the spiteful attacks; but the sunny good-nature which beams in *Memories of Youth* is almost frightening. The book is nevertheless written by a man who, while certainly not solely responsible, must yet share the responsibility for the fate of the German people; by a man who believed himself able to win the whole world and regarded himself as the chosen of God, and who from his dizzy height fell further than any other crowned head in historic times; by a man whose frowning eyebrows once awoke unrest among all the diplomats of Europe and who now is not even considered worthy of hatred, but only of a pitying contempt, and this man seems contented with his world. It is without parallel in history. But the explanation lies near at hand. That which was his misfortune in the days of his power is now to his advantage. He who is without anchorage, he who never quite knows how to attach himself to anything cannot suffer greatly. He who was always an alien in Germany can accept exile from Germany with tranquillity.

Memories of Youth, in itself a quite unimportant book, in several respects explains and vindicates its author. But it is no monument to his honour; and no one can be more sensible of this than he who has

read it with care and with the intention to seek for everything that can be said in Wilhelm II's defence. Kaiser Wilhelm stands in History as the complete antithesis to his uncle, Edward VII, whom he hated so intensely and by whom at the same time he never ceased to be attracted and interested, the successful and unsentimental man of the world, who wished to lead fashions and world policy and accomplished both with great success, the humane realist whose reign was so important in the history of his country. Edward VII spoke in the name of history when he said of Wilhelm II: "He is the most brilliant failure in history."

CHURCHILLS

I

MARLBOROUGH

THERE was once a Winston Churchill whose ambition it was to win an undying name by his literary achievements. His King, "the merry monarch," Charles II, had given him a small, subordinate and not very remunerative place at Whitehall as a reward for his proved loyalty during the years of revolution. He employed his leisure hours in the authorship of a stupendous work entitled *Divi Britannici*, which was duly completed in 1675. No human being has read it, but the title-page alone contains the memorials of the whole of the English Kings from the creation of the world, 2855 B.C., to the year of grace 1660.

The author hardly won the renown he hoped for. On the other hand, his loyalty won in the end another reward. For the sake of the principle of legitimacy he had risked his life and sacrificed his property during the rule of the grievous usurper Cromwell. His small place was not enough to provide him with a life free from solicitude, but his eldest daughter Arabella took service with the Duchess of York. There she attracted the notice of the Duke, the good James Stuart, who unhappily, it is true, fell, in the matter of religion, into the

Roman Catholic heresy, but whose taste in the only question which really interested him was catholic in the original and true meaning of the word. For her youth's sake the lenient Prince overlooked the fact that Arabella Churchill was not a regular beauty, and the young lady-in-waiting did double service. Pride and gladness prevailed in the home of the old royalist, and Winston Churchill could gratefully sigh with Simeon: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

It was in the year 1668 that the royal favour began to shine upon Miss Arabella Churchill. The year before, her brother Jack had become an ensign in the Guards; he was then only seventeen years old. He differed from his father in that he took a less sentimental view of his sister's elevation. He was a handsome lad and was himself aware of it. He carried himself well and danced superbly. Thanks to his sister he moved in the highest circles, and there became in a short time an outstanding personality among the ladies. It was whispered that he meant to sell his charms for a substantially higher price than had his sister.

The young Jack Churchill did not take very much after his father. He had no taste for study or literary labours. Nor did he yearn after the martyr's crown won by sacrifice in the holy cause of Legitimacy. Above all he was not a man of ideas; he was a man of the world. He wielded a reluctant pen, but in compensation he readily and with a certain complacency carried his right hand to the sword-hilt. Nevertheless he never drew the sword unnecessarily. Cool and prudent, the ensign of eighteen bore himself at Court with an obliging and most dignified air. With the same

haughty unmoved smile he replied to the ardent glance of the beauties and the questionings of high-born cavaliers. Nothing was able to upset him.

In the year 1670 Jack Churchill disappeared from the horizon of the Court. He returned the next year, tanned and statelier than ever, and with a stock of authentic stories of his battles with the Moors at Tangiers. Among those who most eagerly crowded about the new Roland was the beautiful Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine, lately created Duchess of Cleveland by a warmly admiring King. Her gaze grew dreamy when, in solitude, she thought of Jack Churchill's cool blue eyes and, in order to obtain the opportunity of observing them with due care and leisure, she paid, it is said, £5,000, which the businesslike Adonis invested so that it would bring him interest at the rate of 10 per cent.

Unfortunately Charles II obtained unequivocal information concerning this idyll, and Jack Churchill received unexpected orders to accompany the Duke of Monmouth to Flanders. He went without a sigh, and Charles himself assumed the responsibility of consoling the poor Duchess.

In Flanders Churchill served under the great Turenne, who at once took notice of "*le bel Anglais*." He was the same in war as in love, successful and unmoved. He distinguished himself at Nimeguen and Maestricht, showed a great aptitude for siege tactics and made elaborate strategical dispositions. He was no young Hotspur who sought battle but, if it occurred, he handled his sword skilfully and calmly in cavalry charges. Already in 1674 his renown had penetrated to Louis XIV himself, who appointed him Colonel

in the French army. Some years later he became also Colonel in the English infantry.

In the winter of 1676–7 Jack Churchill was at home on leave in London. At a ball at Whitehall he danced assiduously with a sixteen-year-old Miss Sarah Jennings, a neat and rather impertinent young lady. When a flourish of trumpets brought the ball to an end, Jack Churchill was no longer the unmoved conqueror: he had suffered a terrible defeat.

The young Lady-in-waiting upon whom he had attended during the evening was the daughter of a landed proprietor of an old and somewhat declining family. She had lost her father at the age of eight, and, as her mother mostly lived in London, the little girl ruled over the household at home. She had an aptitude for the task. She gave orders and decisions, and found the occupation delightful. Sweet, talented, naturally amiable as she was, it was really a pity that she never could learn to curtsey, but only to stamp on the floor. She was only a little girl when she made her début at Court; she at once won admirers but kept them at a proper distance. She was, for the matter of that, so haughty that not even James Stuart ventured to make any but formal approaches. On the other hand, she struck up a warm friendship with James's daughter, the little Princess Anne, a nice little absent-minded child who looked up with unaffected admiration to the assured and quick-witted vixen.

Poor Jack Churchill, accustomed to success and conquests! To capture strongholds sword in hand was an easy matter; to win the heart of Miss Jennings was considerably more difficult. It was a trying time which now followed. Churchill's

letters have been preserved and even many of Sarah's. It is a characteristic dialogue. The resplendent climber discloses himself as, for once, a bashful and passionate lover. "If you are unkind, I love so well that I cannot live, for you are my life, my soul, my all that I hold dear in this world." The many long letters, rather ill spelt, rather clumsily expressed, are among the most humanly moving in amorous literature. Reserved and self-contained as usual, Churchill advanced swiftly and steadily, and few had any idea that this favourite of fortune, so soon as he was alone in barracks, in travelling coaches or in strange castles, forgot all diplomatic and military missions and ambitions in order to fill sheet after sheet with complaints, prayers, reproaches and protestations of love. Sarah manifestly took a certain pleasure in the reading, otherwise she would never have taken the trouble to answer the letters. As it was, she bombarded her adorer with letters, expressed with considerably more elegance than his, in which she now snubbed him, now poked fun at him, now openly laughed him to scorn—all of them clever, pretentious, heartless. She let him understand that he considerably overrated himself in aiming so high; at the same time she tormented him with the most unreasonable accusations of infidelity. Did she love him? Perhaps she did, for she took an obvious pleasure in tormenting him. In this young lady's cosmogony there was no place for anything but herself. Nevertheless in the spring of 1678 she married Jack Churchill. We do not know by what means he won her in the end. Perhaps he promised, for a wedding gift, to lay Europe at her feet. He did so, and thus redeemed his promise.

It is difficult to guess what Churchill would have become without his consort. There is in him nothing of the demoniacal and titanic such as one would expect to find in a conqueror of his dimensions. It was in a peculiarly controlled and businesslike manner that he cut the map of Europe to pieces with his sword. His consort engrossed all the romance, feeling, joy and solicitude that was in him. During all the years when he trotted back and forth through Flanders, capturing fortresses and annihilating the victorious French armies, he was not a happy man. Triumphs never intoxicated him; they scarcely so much as gave him pleasure. The victories were only bouquets of roses which he laid at the feet of Sarah, happy if they were not scorned. His heart was with her wherever he was. Only the cool brain worked in Bellona's service. Perhaps it was better so, for war is more fitly managed as a matter of business than as an adventure. The danger, the anguish and the hope, all the things which seize a man and take complete possession of him, these overcame Jack Churchill in his relations with Sarah; after fighting with her, duels with Louis XIV's marshals seemed by comparison free from danger.

Sarah Churchill was intimate with two people only. The one was her husband, whose homage she regarded as the least which could be required of him; she came by degrees to appreciate him when he made her the most influential person in Europe, but he was always the subordinate, the faithful and useful servant. The other was the Princess—afterwards Queen Anne. In this intimate relationship, too, Sarah was the one who dominated. With idolatrous admiration, tenderness and awe

the Princess looked up to the subject, who repaid her ardent friendship with patronising and rather condescending familiarity. To escape formality they called one another in correspondence Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman; it was Sarah Churchill, Mrs. Freeman, who always decided and ruled. The rest of mankind were for Sarah Churchill only instruments to be used and subordinates to command. She had no one above her; she would not even humble herself before God. In her cosmogony she herself took the only place of honour. She was one of the few free-thinkers of that time; in compensation her husband tried his best to serve two divinities, the God of the English Church and Sarah's autocratic will. He believed devoutly in both.

On the other hand, he was by no means overloyal to anyone else. One may perhaps excuse him on the ground that he had occupation enough in maintaining harmony between his two recognised authorities. He stood high in the favour of the later Stuarts, became Lord Churchill, and was laden with honourable commissions, sinecures, gratuities; for the latter he had a certain weakness.

He stuck to James II's side as long as possible and the poor bewildered monarch regarded him as his firm defence against the constantly increasing ill-will of the English nation. When things began in earnest to look hopeless for the Stuart cause, Churchill suddenly acquired conscientious scruples against serving a Catholic King. Because he sacrificed all personal considerations out of solicitude for the sacred cause of Protestantism many have considered that Churchill deserves a great reward in heaven; others have been of the

opinion that the rats' desertion of the sinking ship by no means qualifies them for hagiographic representation.

Churchill held out his hand nevertheless to William III, without noticeably troubling himself with the thought of the fate or feelings of the deserted James; like many other great men he was able to bear the misfortunes of others with manly fortitude. Remorse for the deed only put in an appearance later. Churchill, in fact, never quite got on with the taciturn and reserved Orange; they resembled each other, William and Churchill, and they mistrusted each other.

At the beginning William seems to have set himself to win Churchill; he perceived at once that the Englishman was a diplomatic and military genius, and he needed his support. Orange was a foreigner in England and had a presentiment that he would never be anything else. Churchill became Earl of Marlborough, suppressed the disturbances in Ireland and fought successfully against the French in Flanders. On the other hand, the relations between William and Lady Marlborough were less good. Orange, like most Dutchmen, was a little stingy and, chiefly on that ground, came to have strained relations with his sister-in-law, the Princess Anne. She was a thoroughly inoffensive creature, disposed to suffer in silence, but at her side stood Lady Marlborough, who, on the contrary, was not sparing of words when it was a question of criticising William's defective liberality. In a short time the enmity between the Court and Lady Churchill was complete, and what Lady Churchill thought, her husband thought sooner or later. Marlborough associated himself

with William's opponents and, while the King was in Flanders making arrangements for the next campaign against France, Marlborough began negotiations with Saint Germains. The result was that Marlborough had to spend the spring of 1692 within the thick walls of the Tower.

Orange, however, was to learn that he was not rid of his dangerous subject by putting him in prison. Lady Sarah, in fact, was still outside. She raged like a hurricane, and Princess Anne played the accompaniment with disconsolate gestures. Marlborough was soon set free again; but, as one might expect, the friendship between him and William was never particularly warm after this interlude. In the following year Marlborough was rather out of the game. But when the month of March 1702 came, Orange was called away from this life and from a throne which had brought him more glory than pleasure. His sister-in-law Anne became Queen. That meant that England was to be ruled by the two Marlboroughs.

Now followed Sarah's time of greatness. Even before the campaign against France had had time to get under way she was a Duchess, and later triumphs followed one another in rapid succession.

The Queen was her obedient slave. Now and then a dead-tired courier arrived from Flanders with letters from the Duke, full of glowing manifestations of love and accounts of the latest tremendous victory over the French, which he hoped would afford his beloved a little gratification. The hope was justified, for the Duchess took an ostentatious part in the celebration of the victories. After the battle of Blenheim—or Hochstedt, as we say in the Swedish school books—the ancient royal castle of

Woodstock with its appurtenant domains was granted to Marlborough and his descendants, and there a new palace was to be erected at the expense of the State which, in memory of the great event, was to be called Blenheim. Sarah seemed to have made up her mind that, just as King Louis XIV had been humiliated on the field of battle, so he should also be outdone in architecture. Blenheim Palace was designed and erected in a style which obviously contemplated and far outshone Versailles. The management of this amused her and gave occasion for sharp skirmishes with the unfortunate architect, and even more with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was amazed at the magnitude of the accounts presented.

During this year the Duke was unremittingly occupied with the alteration of the map of Europe. After Blenheim he was beyond doubt the most notable man in the world; nor, thanks to his German title of Prince, did etiquette require him to make obeisance to anyone. Eugene of Savoy paid open homage to him as his teacher and leader. He wielded the same sovereign power over the policy of the Coalition as over its military tactics. Amiable, unmoved and invincible, he went on from victory to victory and was held to be more than human. The diplomatic triumphs were not less important than the strategic; the greatest was perhaps his visit to a King of a far-off land in the North which had recently come into prominence out of the Polish chaos. Marlborough's mission to Alt-Ranstädt was immensely significant; if the Swedish army had turned against the forces of the Coalition, the history of the world would probably have taken another direction. Marlborough wrote to Sarah

that he thought highly of the young Swedish King, but he did not conceal that he considered him a poor statesman. Unquestionably he lacked Marlborough's ability. What King Karl on his side thought of the handsome, elegant, beribboned prince, duke and marquis, to whose fluent and courteous French he listened attentively, is unhappily not known to us.

The years went by in unbroken triumph. Why should they not go on in the same way for ever? So one might wonder, but there was unfortunately in England a gradually growing band of prosaic, middle-class people who considered that these victories, though certainly excellent in themselves, were rather costly in human life and money. There were politicians who even went so far as openly to declare that victories, which did not lead to settlement and peace, were not entirely worth striving after. These observations are, of course, founded upon a prejudiced ignorance of the true nature of the art of war; simple laymen who read the war historian's panegyrical accounts of Marlborough's victories, which succeeded each other year in year out, but which apparently did not lead to an end of the endless fighting, have, however, even to-day, a certain inclination to sympathise with the irresponsible critics of Marlborough. With every year people in England began to long more and more for the end of the war, and the number of those who considered that victory was better than peace, grew ever fewer.

But Marlborough could have overruled the opinion of the English people in this respect if another much stronger force than that of the English people had not begun to work in a direction

unfavourable to him. The temper of the Duchess of Marlborough had indeed never been very equable, but with the years it grew worse and worse. Marlborough had domestic griefs. His only son, the Marquis of Blandford, died when he was a little boy. His daughters grew up and displayed brilliant gifts, but unhappily they could not keep peace with their mother, a task for which it must be admitted that superhuman qualifications in the way of submissiveness and patience were required. Marlborough sighed and exhorted his daughters to obedience to the best of mothers, but with meagre result. And then these conflicts only gave place to another far more calamitous.

Queen Anne had, strictly speaking, given more than she received in her relations with the Duchess of Marlborough. She had bestowed a complete, unreserved devotion, the tenderest letters and protestations, titles, goods and gold without measure, and finally the control of her kingdom. She had received in return snubs and outbreaks of temper, reproaches and reproofs, commands and contradictions. But she could not live without friendship, and no power on earth would have been able to shake the Duchess's position if she herself had not thought herself too important to defend it. She introduced into the Court an insignificant poor relation, a little Miss Abigail Hill; the Duchess described her as a worm and treated her as such right up to the time of her discovery that she was a powerful and venomous worm, almost certainly a snake. This Abigail Hill, afterwards Mrs. Masham, succeeded in winning the Queen's confidence and friendship. No more was needed; in the same moment that the Queen found another

outlet for her passion for friendship the fate of the Duchess was sealed.

It is really a great comedy. The ways of Providence are in truth unfathomable. A Miss Hill's, a Miss Nobody's insinuating ways overthrew the gigantic Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. The Coalition fell with her. Louis XIV was saved. Spain got another King, France other boundaries. The Duchess of Marlborough stamped her foot a little too hard in her Queen's presence and Europe took on a new aspect.

After his fall Marlborough glides entirely in his wife's shadow. In exile on his property in England and finally on the bed of sickness he preserved his calm and aristocratic dignity. His fighting time was over. His diplomatic talent, which easily stood the test when it was a question of leading the European States, appeared inconsiderable when it was a question of keeping the peace between Sarah and her household. During his last illness he wandered about in his palace with slow, tottering step; he stopped before his handsome portrait painted by Kneller. "That was a man, once," he sighed. But that had been on the Continent, when Sarah was at a distance. Now the man's master never left his side any more, and the Duke of Marlborough, who departed this life one day in June 1722, was a tractable old gentleman in his seventy-second year, without much strength of will.

But Sarah lived long afterwards to spread dread and horror around her. The House of Hanover paid her much deference, but, as she was not satisfied with less than autocratic power over the world, gave her many causes for bitterness. She could console herself with the fact that there were

none who did not tremble when she approached with flashing eyes and raised cane. Her fame spread widely over the world. Voltaire visited her but failed to win her favour. "I believed he was a man of sense, but I see that he is at bottom either a fool or a philosopher."

There we have the conflict between the one who wants to hold sway over the universe and the one who contents himself with the belief that he knows it.

At the coronation of George II the Duchess announced that she desired to take part in the procession, although she now could not get about without crutches. She took up her leading position and limped along painfully but with determination. When it chanced that the procession was obliged to halt, the old Duchess dowager seized a drum from a drummer and sat resolutely down on it to recover her breath. The people burst into cheers. The ordinary man has usually a feeling for the monumental and the characteristic, and he perceived that the drum was the Duchess dowager's fitting throne. There she sat holding on to her crutches like a picture of power, autocratic will, tenacity and ill-temper. "Long live the Duchess of Marlborough!" cried the crowd.

It was in the year 1744 that she first met her match. She was then eighty-four years of age and perhaps she did not grudge death his victory. For she had had her share; Blenheim was without an equal, her wealth bordered on the fabulous, her papers were in order. She lies at Blenheim; the Duke, who had been buried at Westminster, was now removed to her side. Perhaps he longed for it, for the human heart is past finding out and,

lonely among the warriors and statesmen at Westminster, he felt himself, maybe, too far removed from what had filled his life, that perpetual, anxious wooing of a woman who could be moved only by conquered Kingdoms, States and Provinces, by Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet.

Thus Marlborough is dimly perceived in his letters, yet only known in part, with his defects and merits, so human, so strong and so weak, so hard and so pliable, so unscrupulous and so tender. But in legend he became another; England's greatest general, the unconquerable, the chosen of Jupiter, and, when all else about him was forgotten, his name lived on as something inhuman, a legend, a terror, spoken with wonder and fear even by the children :

Malbrouck, s'en va-t'en guerre,
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine.
Ne sais quand reviendra—

II

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

THE Marlborough family estate is rich in memories. Woodstock's history is as old as England's. Saxon Kings whose existence is somewhat dubious certainly held Court there. Alfred the Great resided there. Henry I of Plantagenet filled the park with exotic wild beasts. The Black Prince often rode forth from the castle archway, and in its windows Queen Eleanor stood and gazed out over the crowns of the oaks. Elizabeth was held prisoner at Woodstock during the reign of Bloody Mary. Walter Scott, in one of his best known romances, has related Charles Stuart's adventures in the same castle. Nowhere in England could one be scared at night by more aristocratic ghosts.

When Blenheim was built, new and proud memories were added to the old. It is said that the ducal race of Churchill is distinguished by a special arrogance of demeanour; as to that it must be admitted that humility cannot be the easiest quality for the inheritors of Blenheim to acquire, for no King is more proudly housed. Few of the Dukes of Marlborough have had any more notable qualifications, but the right to pride themselves on their name and castle none can dispute.

In the year 1857 the seventh Duke of Marl-

borough succeeded to his father and ceremoniously installed himself at Blenheim. He was at this time a pious man with embarrassed finances; in his youth his interests had been more worldly. By his wife, a daughter of the Marquess of Londonderry, he had five sons and six daughters. Of the boys, three died at a tender age; the eldest, the Marquess of Blandford, was clever, but is chiefly remembered on the ground of his scandalous divorce; he belonged, be it said, to the Victorian era, when such were still regarded as something unusual. The third son, Lord Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill, came to play a short but brilliant rôle on the political scene.

There was not so very much in the young Lord Randolph's character which foreboded the great statesman. He was an ugly little boy with a gooseberry-coloured face, round, protruding eyes and a very turned-up nose. He was rather lazy and intractable, careless about his appearance and his clothing, impetuous and inconsiderate. When at Oxford he was anything but promising. His friends valued him for his impulsive, spontaneous manner and for his happy laugh, but the dons regarded him with suspicion though he was credited with a good memory. He liked reading Gibbon, in other respects he differed very little from his noble friends and comrades. He devoted himself chiefly to fox-hunting and to the pursuit of pleasure, not always of the most innocent kind, and Lord Randolph had to pay for it with the price of his health.

At the age of twenty-four he married a rich and beautiful American whose father's money was more than welcome. At the same time he was elected

a member of Parliament by the loyal inhabitants of Woodstock. The newly-married couple established themselves in London, where the young Lord kept a large establishment. He met the Prince of Wales and won that brilliant young Prince's friendship. He gave a dinner for Disraeli, who in outward appearance somewhat resembled an Egyptian mummy; the old statesman could by this time only touch brandy-and-water, but thanked him nevertheless in his customary suave and precious manner: "My dear Randolph, I have sipped your excellent champagne, I have drunk your exquisite Burgundy, I have tasted your delicious port." The old Jew was, however, the only phenomenon which overawed Lord Randolph. It was an exception for him to be seen in Parliament; he made a maiden speech which had hardly any success, though it was arrogant enough. He occupied himself at race meetings and other expensive amusements. If he had gone on as he began he might have counted on ending his days as Lord Privy Seal or Viceroy. He was Society's favourite. But ruin followed in the tracks of fortune. The Marquess of Blandford's scandal filled London with moral indignation and Lord Randolph passionately took his elder brother's part. It was unwisely done. The favourite became the wolf in the fold. The fashionable drawing-rooms were hastily closed to him. His father, the Duke of Marlborough, was soon afterwards appointed Viceroy of Ireland; from a very highly exalted quarter he was informed that it would be expedient for his son Randolph to bear his father company. It was a severe blow for the recklessly laughing young aristocrat. He felt himself injured and outcast. But he had no

intention of submitting. He had no intention of returning to his father's house like the prodigal son. Was the way of thinking in Court circles really, all things considered, the only right one? Perhaps there were more things in heaven and earth than Marquesses in high places dreamed of. In this frame of mind Lord Randolph travelled to Ireland. There he made a discovery, a terrible discovery, a discovery which a patriotic gentleman had no business to make: he found that all was not well with Ireland. It was bad in itself to make such a discovery; it was worse that the deplorable mismanagement, in Lord Randolph's opinion, could not exclusively be regarded as the visitation of the Lord, directly occasioned by Ireland's disobedience. It was worst of all that he did not keep this opinion to himself; he went to London and, in a speech in Parliament, said straight out that the English government of Ireland was to some extent pure misgovernment. What a paradox, thought the kindly disposed; what a sorry jest, was the opinion of the majority. The Duke of Marlborough in desperation wrote to the Secretary of State for Ireland that his son's only excuse was that he must have been mad or drunk. But Lord Randolph remained defiant. He revenged himself by shocking his neighbours. But he still took little interest in politics; he was usually silent. Several years passed, and in 1880 the Tories were obliged ignominiously to make way for Gladstone, who with all the honours of war took possession of the House of Commons and formed his second Government.

That was a turning-point in the history of England. The Disraeli legend was ended; the next year he himself was gathered to his fathers.

For six years he had had the opportunity of enjoying the sweets of unrestricted power. There is no doubt that these years had been a disappointment both to himself and to his followers. He got his opportunity too late; the road had been too long and too arduous. He was physically broken down and tired to death when, in the year 1874, he formed his great Ministry. But, *malgré tout*, there was a new spirit in England during his Government. Nothing much had been done, it is true, but a feeling was abroad that this was due only to accidental obstacles; it was felt that only opportunity was wanting for much to be accomplished. Disraeli's unprejudiced realism had poured new life into the rigid Tory Party. Now he was gone. What would happen now? Would they go back to the old ways or continue in the great master's track? Would the Tory party's cause once more become identified with the class interests of the antiquated landowners? Would Conservative statemanship once more be based upon the principle that whatever is, is best?

That is what the younger English Conservatives, not without a certain uneasiness, asked themselves in the year 1880. The leading of the somewhat disheartened Tory party in the House of Commons could not be described as brilliant. At its head stood Sir Stafford Northcote, a sound financier, not particularly talented but entirely respectable. At his side was a Mr. Smith, a sedate, well-intentioned and sleek gentleman. They had many kindred spirits among the older and well-to-do landowners and men of business. They certainly had some idea of the desirability of harking back to the former, happier times when there was still no

radicalism; in reality it came to be their only political object, politely and without result to criticise the policy of the all-powerful Gladstone.

The Grand Old Man felt himself more than ever the chosen of the Lord. His great adversary, whose diabolical wickedness had caused him so much mortification, was defeated and gone. He was only seventy-one and could with confidence count upon some decades of the exercise of unrestricted power. With admiration mingled with terror a submissive Parliament listened to his majestic periods, which succeeded one another in an endless stream; the audience was by this time just as well convinced as the speaker himself that the voice which they heard was that of the Highest.

Armour-plated virtue is a terrible power. The active figure was taller than anyone else's; the virile, sharp-cut face had become with the years only the more charged with energy; a lightning flash out of the eagle eyes annihilated all attempt at opposition. To attack the Grand Old Man was rebellion against God. The sword of Gideon would shatter the audacious.

But the miracle came to pass. Time and again during the session a Tory, very young, very short of stature, with large moustaches and a confident expression on his ugly face, rose and began to revile Gladstone. Often it was sheer effrontery, unmeasured, insolent invective; at times importunate and sarcastic questions; at others telling satire. The house held its breath. What would the Grand Old Man do? Would he ignore him or would he trouble himself to render him harmless by an Olympian gesture? He did neither. Instead, Gladstone became nervous, embarrassed, irritated.

He was not used to attacks of this kind and did not rightly know how to meet them. Moreover, Randolph Churchill was the son of the Duke of Marlborough and, like all the elder democrats, Gladstone had a great weakness for the aristocracy. The elephant appeared to be seriously disturbed by the buzzing mosquito. Nothing more was needed for Lord Randolph to become a marked man in the House of Commons. He had, moreover, a special merit which Gladstone lacked. He was never dull. The Grand Old Man knew more about politics than anyone else, he had all the finances and statutes of England at his fingers' ends and his eloquent speeches were full of information. Lord Randolph had as a rule not a notion of the bearing of the questions on which he expressed an opinion. His radiant irresponsibility was infinitely more entertaining than Gladstone's eminent knowledge of his subject. Vituperations are more popular than figures.

Two middle-aged Conservatives, Sir Henry Wolff and Mr. Gorst, appeared in the House of Commons. They were politicians, well versed in worldly wisdom. They decided to place their knowledge of affairs and their practical sagacity at the disposal of the undaunted iconoclast, less for the purpose of assisting him than of annoying the Grand Old Man.

Thus was formed the Fourth Party, which also included as a member a supercilious, sickly and somewhat indolent young man whose special interests were music and philosophy. He bore the name of Arthur Balfour. He still remained in the background for some time longer, but it produced a great effect when he raised himself from his half-

reclining position to enlighten a Radical speaker by telling him that his speech was compounded in equal portions of bad history, bad logic and bad taste.

Lord Randolph Churchill, on the other hand, was heard much more frequently. His arguments were perhaps sometimes unduly popular. He won his spurs in the tragi-comic Bradlaugh affair. Bradlaugh was an inoffensive man who had made up his mind that God did not exist and who talked incessantly about this discovery with the same ecstasy with which a lover speaks of his sweetheart. This Bradlaugh had been disqualified for Parliament when he refused to take the oath upon the Bible.

The Conservatives naturally enough considered that this ceremony must, in existing circumstances, lose much of its edifying effect. Lord Randolph had discovered a passage in Bradlaugh's writings in which not only God but also the members of the House of Hanover were alluded to in blasphemous terms. He brought the book with him to the House, quoted from it, threw it on the floor and stamped upon it. This argument was indeed easy to understand and it made a strong impression on the assembly. The Grand Old Man saw himself without enthusiasm obliged to defend Bradlaugh. There were opportunities for ghastly accusations on Lord Randolph's part. Another time he compared Gladstone with Redshid Pasha, a Turkish Vizier, who with taste and ability had conducted the massacres after the rising in Albania. The queer thing is that Gladstone should have been so painfully affected.

But Lord Randolph had even more pointed

arrows for his bow. Gladstone had once received at Hawarden Castle a deputation of workmen in the manner which, in the admiring Press, was always called unpretentious. Lord Randolph's reference to the reception was not without point: "It has always seemed to me peculiar and unnatural that the great chief of the Radical party should reside in a castle. But let us not concern ourselves with that. One would suppose that the deputation was received indoors in a library, a drawing-room or a dining-room. Nothing of the sort. That would not have helped to advertise the party. Another scene had to be arranged. The workmen are led across the level of the wide park which is strewn with felled tree-trunks, sacrifices to Mr. Prime Minister's pet hobby. Thus they suddenly encounter the Prime Minister and his son Master Herbert, simply attired and dripping with sweat, eagerly engaged in destroying a gigantic oak which just uttered its last groans like a dying man. The workmen are allowed to gape and marvel and worship, and each is presented with some chips in memory of the occasion." It does not hit off Gladstone, but it unquestionably hits off the hagiographic literature which grew up with him as its centre.

The Fourth Party had, however, even weightier tasks than the baiting of Gladstone. One of them was to dethrone poor Sir Stafford Northcote from the leadership of the Tory party. When in 1883 he unveiled a statue of Disraeli, they commented on his unhappy lot in an article entitled "The mantle of Elijah." It contained an invocation to Disraeli's memory and an exhortation to the Conservatives to seek a leader worthy to take up the inheritance

of the mighty dead. It appeared more than clearly from this article that Lord Randolph did not regard Sir Stafford as the legitimate heir. Later he explained that he pointed to the Marquess of Salisbury as Disraeli's most fitting heir; as likely as not it was his ingenuous opinion that the only man whose shoulders were fit for the mantle of Elijah bore the name of Randolph Churchill. At least one can understand that, at the time, the article was taken in that sense.

It was perhaps not very modest, but it must be admitted that Lord Randolph had read Disraeli's speeches and writings with due care. He called his political point of view Tory-democrat; it was Disraeli's gospel without extraneous additions. Now, as always, the least felicitous part had the greatest success; for example, the attack upon the aristocratic Whig policy, for this Whig policy belonged to the irretrievable past, and Disraeli's diatribes against it in the 1830's were, strictly speaking, not quite up to date in the 1880's. But none of the Conservatives thought of that, they rather accepted gratefully anything which could in any way be considered as an attack upon the adversary. On the other hand, the parts of Lord Randolph's policy in which he attached himself to the positive in Disraeli's statecraft awoke misgivings.

It should be possible to formulate one of Disraeli's weightiest political revelations thus, that there is all the difference in the world between an action which is done in the name of God and the same action which is performed under the invocation of the other powers. Practically applied, this thesis may be taken to mean that the best thing a Conservative

Government can do is to promote Radical policy. Corruptions are bound to come, and the only question is through whom the corruption comes. The Conservatives alone can permit themselves any Radical excesses whatever without laying hands upon those ideas which are the backbone of the civilised life of the community. If they failed steadfastly to take some steps in this direction they would be rewarded by seeing themselves pitched out of the saddle, and the condemned Radical projects carried through by a Liberal Government which consciously or unconsciously aimed at the dissolving of the bond which unites the masses and the classes into one State.

Lord Randolph Churchill had once for all cast off the rose-tinted glasses of the Court aristocracy, and for him there was no difficulty in concurring with Disraeli. He could insist in earnest upon a practical settlement of the Irish question, he could insist upon radical Land reforms and social legislation favourable to the workers. During the time when England's richest men had turned their backs on the scandal-tainted scions of the house of Marlborough he had begun to suspect that a superfluity of money did not always imply superior intelligence. This was hard for Conservative politicians to stomach, men whose sole qualification could be studied in the income tax returns.

Yet, so far, the suspicion of the Conservative leaders did not find expression in direct enmity. Lord Randolph had actually made the party popular. The man in the street liked him. He liked his easily understood invective, his undaunted eagerness, his freedom from snobbery. He had also a feeling that the young aristocrat wished well to the people

in the cottages. His ugly and picturesque appearance, his boisterous laugh, his nonchalant gestures, his obvious audacity, his go-as-you-please jollity—all won the humorous approval of the English people. Lord Randolph was funny; they were grateful for that. He was in any case something different from officials and City magnates with prosy voices and masses of statistics.

Even among the circle to which he belonged by birth, Lord Randolph won friends. He began to know the world very well and could say neat things about his acquaintances. Careless, impetuous, cordial, agreeably cynical and boyishly naïve at once, he was indisputably winning. His friends quoted an epigram of Martial's :

> "*Difficilis, facilis, jocundus, acerbus, es idem :*
> *Nec tecum possum vivere, nec sine te.*"

The Conservative leaders could concur with the last line. In 1885 Gladstone was overthrown and the leader of the Fourth Party could not easily be passed over. He took office in Lord Salisbury's first Ministry as Secretary of State for India; he managed it well, took part in the annexation of Burma and in the improvement of the Indian railways. His greatest triumph, however, was that Sir Stafford Northcote had to resign his place as leader of the Conservatives in the Commons; the tried political veteran did not recover from the blow and died of a broken heart, but *c'est la guerre*. The Ministry did not live long. Gladstone once more ascended to the throne, but soon fell again on the Irish question. In 1886 Lord Randolhp was again in office; this time he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, leader of the House of Commons and

the second person in the Government. His star stood in a lucky constellation. He knew it would not long remain there, for death itself in its most horrible form was not far off. But the complaint had not yet begun in earnest and Lord Randolph laughed recklessly. Lord Rosebery asked him how long he expected to hold his office. "Oh, round about six months." "And then?" "Why, Westminster Abbey." That spring and summer Lord Randolph conducted the business of the House of Commons in a brilliant fashion. He daily gained wisdom and tact; so much so that Queen Victoria laid by her mistrust and sent him an autograph letter in flattering terms. In the autumn he made his most mature political speeches, well considered and well delivered. He promised a great deal; he announced that he had found a means to reduce national expenditure and with it taxation also. "I shall be bitterly disappointed if it does not lie in my power, after one or at most two years, to show the public that substantial and honest efforts are being made in this direction."

At the Treasury he felt himself at the beginning somewhat bewildered by the multitude of figures, but he soon got into the way of it. He devised his Budget carefully. He tried to apportion the taxes to the advantage of productive enterprise; to that end he devised a new scheme of succession duty and land tax. The final figures showed a great reduction in the burden of taxation. When he first brought forward his proposals in the Cabinet he met with no opposition. But later he fell into controversy with the War Secretary, his old antagonist Mr. Smith, who could, he thought, manage much more economically. In the end he

sent an ultimatum to Salisbury; he bade him choose between him and Smith. Without hesitation Salisbury chose Smith. On the 23rd December *The Times* reported that the Chancellor had tendered his resignation.

Lord Randolph never for a moment supposed that it would be accepted. But he did not know the Marquess of Salisbury. The old Tory kept himself to himself, held aloof from his colleagues and only communicated with them by letter. This was wise, for in this way none knew where they had him. For his own part Salisbury was occupied with the care of England's Foreign policy, and as for internal policy, he desired chiefly that nothing new or disturbing should be undertaken. He distrusted Lord Randolph. Talk about Democracy appeared to him to be either foolish babble or dangerous radicalism. He had never liked Disraeli, his political ideal was rather *l'ancien régime*. Even if that were now obsolete, Salisbury was a man to set himself above the opinions and wishes of the multitude. Smith was insignificant, but he was solid and obedient. After a deal of vain searching Salisbury found another Chancellor whom he appointed as Lord Randolph's successor.

The comedy was over. The tragedy remained. Lord Randolph's further performances on the political stage were all desperate failures. It was partly in consequence of this that now he took the field upon another far more terrible arena.

When it became clear to him that his time as a Minister actually was ended he set out on a journey to North Africa. His fellow-travellers noticed that neither storms on the Mediterranean nor danger of cholera could induce the mortified man to tear

his thoughts from the past. What did he think? Perhaps already he murmured to himself the proud words of Dryden which some years later he wrote down in his note-book.

> " Happy the man, and happy he alone,
> He who can call to-day his own—
> He who, secure within, can say :
> ' To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.
> Come fair or foul, or rain or shine,
> The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
> Not Heaven itself over the past hath power;
> But what has been has been, and I have had my hour.' "

He might well need the consolation. The last phase of the malady which soon began its work was general paralysis, but the road to the journey's end was paved with torments without measure. Lord Randolph did not give in. During the next year he often appeared in Parliament, where the Conservatives now regarded him with cold hostility. Once when he was speaking his voice failed him and he asked for a glass of water. No one moved. He renewed his request. Same result. Finally, a young man rose from one of the back benches and fetched a glass. Lord Randolph thanked him and expressed his hope that the young politician had not on that account ruined his future in the Party.

He travelled to South Africa on business; before all was over he wished to get together a little money for his wife and his boys. When he returned he was a bald, bearded man, pale as death, on whom death had already set his mark. He had difficulty in speaking and difficulty in bearing his torments. That was in 1893. His old friend Balfour was now the Conservative leader. The effeminate æsthete had disappeared, he was now

called "Bloody Balfour" on the Irish benches. The Grand Old Man was again Prime Minister, eighty-four years old, more upright and more vigorous than ever. Balfour was seized with compassion for the broken Lord Randolph and, in a friendly letter, begged him to take his old place in the House of Commons. Yet once more Lord Randolph addressed the assembly which he had formerly captivated by his ready repartees. He spoke now time after time. The House listened, distressed and shocked, to the inarticulate sounds which the speaker, lately so brilliant, now laboriously uttered. But it was observed that the Grand Old Man always pretended to listen attentively when his former enemy was speaking. Did he reflect, the mighty chosen of the Lord, upon the fate of those who meddle with the abominations of the Philistines? His face now more than ever resembled an eagle's, but Lord Randolph's attacks on him could only call up an expression of compassion in his great shining eyes.

On platforms all over the country the tragic struggle was repeated. Lord Randolph still attracted great audiences, but they went home dismayed; the sight of the shattered man's vain attempts to keep on became too ghastly even for the hardiest. In 1894 the doctors persuaded Lord Randolph to travel round the world and rest his tired brain. His wife accompanied him. This journey, the last, was not so trying; now and then a blood-vessel burst in the brain and each time there was a little loss of memory and capacity for thought, but at the same time the torments were mitigated. He reached Burma, the vast country which under his direction had become the property

of the British Crown. There the curtain fell. Helpless, incapable in mind and body, he was carried home. For a month he was cared for at the house of the old Duchess of Marlborough. So the fire of life died down to its end on the 24th of January, 1895.

The Grand Old Man was just then occupied with the compilation of a number of studies concerning Bishop Joseph Butler's philosophy and theology. A little later he plunged into the Greek mythology and began to take measures for the union of the Christian Churches. Cardinal Rampolla unhappily took up a position in opposition, but Gladstone found new occupation in the action against the Turks. He grieved for his old doctor, who died in 1894, but, on the other hand, what did he want with one?

III

WINSTON CHURCHILL

THE English Chancellor of the Exchequer must, in the spring of 1927, have read the Liberal papers with mixed feelings. In the leading articles he has seen his Budget characterised as a wily attempt to trick the English nation; in the literary section of the same organs he has read that his newly published book, *The World Crisis*, 1916–1918, is a masterpiece surpassing Julius Cæsar's *De Bello Gallico*.

It is an unusual situation. Winston Churchill, be it said, has never sought the literary laurels which a unanimous opinion now accords him. He has written most of his books in order to defend his policy and his actions, to win the favour of Jupiter rather than that of Apollo. Everything is, of course, relative, and for Winston Churchill it may well be almost a disappointment to be hailed as a great author.

Winston Churchill has often had occasion for disappointment. It may seem ungrateful to be dissatisfied when one is England's Chancellor of the Exchequer and one of the most influential men of his time, but, again, one must remember everything is relative. Brilliant as Churchill's career has been, it has yet been much less brilliant than he himself has expected, than he himself had

a right to expect. What for others would have been success, for him has been felt as tragic failure.

His talent is unique. He has given proof of greater intelligence, energy and courage than almost any other contemporary statesman. His career has shown that his potentialities are unlimited. By the time he was two-and-twenty he had managed to prove himself, in Cuba, in Afghanistan, by the Upper Nile and in South Africa, an exceptionally efficient and recklessly brave officer; his adventures and exploits were known to the whole world. At the same time he had shown himself, in four books of war and travel, to be a great writer; his first book, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, is a model of style, and at the age of twenty-three he wrote without effort a perfect prose. During the first years of the twentieth century Churchill made himself known as one of the foremost speakers in the House of Commons; at the same time he wrote a life of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, which the most competent of historians called one of the five or six best biographical sketches in English literature. Then followed his years in the Government. When he was two-and-thirty Churchill nearly became Prime Minister; except for Lloyd George he was England's most distinguished statesman. Since then he has frequently changed his department, but in each he has shown himself to be the supremely competent expert. He has been at the head of the Board of Trade, the Home Office, the Admiralty, the Ministry of Munitions, the War Office, the Air Ministry, the Colonial Office and the Treasury. His knowledge is astounding, he is master of the smallest details in questions concerning strategy, mechanics, administration, national

finance, industrial organisation, history and geography. He has, moreover, found time for a number of wild sporting exploits; he seems chiefly to enjoy dangerous mountaineering, but he is one of the most skilful polo players in England. At one time he took up painting and it appeared that he was a considerable artist.

Time after time has Churchill shown himself to be a great and far-seeing statesman. During his years as President of the Board of Trade and Home Secretary he understood the significance and the consequence of the actual social problems of the time as did no one else in England except Lloyd George. When, after the Agadir crisis in 1911, he took over the charge of the Navy, he was alone in the British Cabinet in foreseeing how near the World War actually was; upon the manner in which he carried out his duties, in the years preceding the catastrophe, the naval history of the World War has given the soundest judgment. During the war it was Churchill and not the British General Staff who displayed the greatest military insight; as to that most people are surely now agreed. After the peace Churchill was the only English statesman who immediately understood the danger of Bolshevistic Imperialism. Time after time the development of events has proved him right. It is strange that this man who is so superior to his rivals has never succeeded in calling forth the confidence of the English people, has never attained that dominant position for which he might seem predestined. He is always regarded with a certain mistrust even by those who agree with his opinions. During acute crises he has constantly had to bear the responsibility for the mis-

takes of his colleagues and his subordinates; after the Dardanelles expedition he was the best hated man in England, although there is no doubt that, had the enterprise been conducted as Churchill planned it, the World War would have ended two years the sooner. When anything has gone amiss the rumour at once goes round that Churchill has been at it again. For the observer of English politics this suspicion of Winston Churchill is one of the most curious of phenomena; what can be the reason of it?

Churchill has undeniably certain characteristics which are injurious to a modern politician. He is neither pliable nor conciliatory. Among strangers he moves with an air of frowning aloofness which every popularity hunter should know enough to avoid. His expression in Parliament, someone has said, reminds one of Napoleon's on the 18th Brumaire.

He has had difficulty in getting on with his superiors and he has never mastered his inclination to tell the mighty the unadorned truth. He has often been mercilessly severe in judgment, he has often forgotten himself. He has a fault, fortunately very rare, which is disastrous for him who wishes to appear to the best advantage among mankind; he is incapable of telling a lie, small or great.

Moreover, his physique is frail. His heart, lungs and nerves have often failed him. When all the world saw only a man of iron who, with a working day of eighteen hours, seemed to burn with longing for new burdens, his wife and his closest friends have testified how it was only by extreme exertion that he held himself upright. Incessantly lashing

himself into efforts beyond his powers, incessantly in intensive activity, with every nerve strained to overcome the weariness and the torment, with his head full of far-reaching plans and with every detail of a Department of State present in his memory—in this wise, as Winston Churchill appears, titanic, menacing, he does not fit very well into the political scheme of a democracy.

Lloyd George has been able to conceal the demoniacal in his nature under an agreeable covering of poetry and smiles. Churchill is out of touch with the masses. Ordinary people, reasonably enough, require of their leaders that they shall prophesy a future a little more serene than the present. Churchill has never been able to make any secret of the fact that for him the only value of existence lies in unremitting toil, the exertion of will and the endurance of suffering. That is his great limitation. Human nature cannot do without the idyllic.

It is necessary to know as much as possible of the author's personality to be able rightly to understand the book of 1688 pages which is called *The World Crisis*. The book is certainly a literary masterpiece. Churchill's style is unsurpassed in modern English prose; it rises to great poetry when occasion requires, it is stimulating and graphic, it is at once transparently clear and full of colour. The book is overflowing with vivid portraits and gigantic dramatic scenes; one reads the four big volumes with breathless excitement. In the nature of things it is also the best informed and most suggestive account of the war in its entirety. Certainly Churchill concerns himself almost exclusively with what he has himself experi-

enced and known, but he has a more varied experience of the war than anyone else. He has been pretty nearly everywhere. He has been a member of the War Cabinet and has fought at the front, he has organised supply and made war speeches in Parliament, as a deciding voice and as a subordinate he has taken part in the war at sea, on land and in the air. He has the wide outlook as well as a command of detail. In 1914–15 he was First Lord of the Admiralty, responsible to the Crown and to Parliament for everything concerning the Fleet, he was at that time a member of the Government and thus had also great influence regarding the military operations on land. In 1916 he became an ordinary officer in Flanders. In 1917 and 1918 he was Minister of Munitions, an office which afforded him every opportunity of inspecting the front; thus he was there for Ludendorff's great attack of March 1918. The whole time, tirelessly though in vain, he fought for the strategical ideas which had brought about his fall as First Lord of the Admiralty.

It is, however, not only Churchill's knowledge of the subject and literary talent which makes *The World Crisis* the work it is. It is just as much the temperament of the author. There is in Churchill's personality a deep affinity with the World War as a human manifestation. There was something in the great nation's exertions of energy, thought and will which Winston Churchill perceived as an illumination and which for a moment brought him into harmony with his environment. In his eyes it is only in the hour of trial that mankind can appear great. He felt the disaster as a deliverance. He tells, in *The World Crisis*, with

shattering realism of the toll of the dead, of ships sunk, of the trials of starvation, of towns utterly destroyed, bombs, poison gases, airmen falling from burning air-craft, of submarine crews suffocated at the bottom of the sea; there remained, he says, only torture and cannibalism which the combatant Christian States regarded as undesirable experiments, and this, in fact, only because they were not effective. "But," continues Churchill, in a voice in which one observes pride and triumph, "nothing daunted the valiant heart of man. Son of the Stone Age, vanquisher of Nature with all her trials and monsters, he met the awful and self-inflicted agony with new reserves of fortitude. Freed in the main by his intelligence from mediæval fears, he marched to death with sombre dignity. His nervous system was found in the twentieth century capable of enduring physical and moral stresses before which the simpler natures of primeval times would have collapsed. Again and again to the hideous bombardment, again and again from the hospital to the front, again and again to the hungry submarines, he strode unflinching. And withal, as an individual, preserved through these torments the glories of a reasonable and compassionate mind."

Those are Churchill's individual ethics, projected on a world historical scale. When, in *The World Crisis*, one frequently meets these majestic commentaries upon humanity strained to breaking point, now stimulating as a trumpet call, now solemn as a peal of bells, one is in the presence of Winston Churchill's inmost being, of the devout cult of self-control, suffering and self-abnegation which all his life has entirely possessed him. It

need scarcely be pointed out that these tendencies of his were in harmony with a world at war. When the phrases about the great crisis were silenced and men began to ask themselves what it actually was which had come to pass, one can say that it was as if for some years mankind had been possessed by Churchill's spirit, had strained every nerve to the uttermost and, by means of superhuman efforts, had laid themselves waste. That is the mystic affinity which makes Winston Churchill the Homer of the World War. It has put him in a position to judge friends and foes with equal fairness. Churchill speaks of the Germans as Runeberg speaks of Kulneff. Towards the end of *The World Crisis*, he sums up his opinion of the efforts of the Germans in the World War in a few lines in which it is difficult to discover any other feelings than those of unfeigned admiration.

"Yet, in the sphere of force, human records contain no manifestation like the eruption of the German volcano. For four years Germany fought and defied the five continents of the world by land and sea and air. The German armies upheld her tottering confederates, intervened in every theatre with success, stood everywhere on conquered territory, and inflicted on their enemies more than twice the bloodshed they suffered themselves. To break their strength and science and curb their fury it was necessary to bring all the greatest nations of mankind into the field against them. Overwhelming populations, unlimited resources, measureless sacrifice, the Sea Blockade could not prevail for fifty months. Small States were trampled down in the struggle; a mighty Empire was battered into unrecognisable fragments; and nearly twenty million

men perished or shed their blood before the sword was wrested from that terrible hand. Surely, Germans, for history that is enough!" He who has written thus may also have the right to feel some pride on his country's account over its part in the unequal trial of strength.

In the two first volumes of *The World Crisis* Churchill sketches the history of the political events leading to the World War, his work in connection with the organisation of the British Fleet, his bold and unauthorised mobilisation of England's sea power, the cleansing of the seas of the world from German shipping, and finally the monumental misfortune of the Dardanelles adventure. Churchill's fundamental military idea was this, that Germany must be overcome by means of a flank attack; to break the German western front would take too long and cost too many lives. Of course his view was the right one. If Constantinople had fallen in 1915 the world to-day would be less depopulated and effete. That the Dardanelles expedition failed was primarily due partly to Kitchener's opposition and partly to Admiral de Robeck's incompetence, but Churchill got the blame and it was as a fallen king that in 1916 he commanded his battalion in Flanders. In *The World Crisis*, 1916–1918, he describes the consequence of the triumph of the English General Staff in the debate about the conduct of the war.

The Chief of the General Staff, Sir William Robertson, was, like most of the Entente's hoary and experienced soldiers, of the opinion that the Germans could only be beaten in Flanders by offensives according to rule. People naturally listened to the beribboned and scarred generals

rather than to the gentlemen in mufti, Churchill and Lloyd George. After Churchill was turned out of the Admiralty and before Lloyd George came to be absolute, it was thus Robertson and Haig who directed the conduct of the war. What their offensives implied Churchill shows in terrible figures.

On the first day of the great battle of the Somme the English lost in killed, wounded and missing nearly 60,000 men; the gain was a few square kilometres of shattered soil. The losses of the Germans were comparatively insignificant. An officer of the General Staff has since laid down that this day's operations fully indicated the correctness of the calculations of the Staff and justified its tactical methods. For Churchill it remained certain that successes of this kind must end the war by a German victory. The wastage of the English army was much more rapid than that of the German. It was when Ludendorff followed the methods of the English General Staff and, in the spring of 1918, set his great offensive in motion that the war first turned to the advantage of the Entente; the German troops released from the Eastern front were annihilated in the same manner as formerly the English. But what finally occasioned the German catastrophe was not so much the wholesale slaughter on the Western front as the breakdown of Turkey and Bulgaria. The contention of Churchill and Lloyd George was shown in the end to be more just than the wisdom of the soldiers. It was in the meanwhile a costly mistake; the abandonment of the Churchill strategy had for its outcome some millions in dead and wounded and the exhaustion of European civilisation.

The polemic against the competence of the soldiers is the recurrent theme in *The World Crisis*; it would, however, be erroneous to believe that the book has on this account lost any of its artistic objectivity. The legitimate bitterness against incompetent generals has only increased the intensity of the delineation; for the rest it should be observed that the French are criticised as candidly as the English; particularly terrible are the brilliant portraits of those commanders who were promoted by the Radical parliamentarians on the ground of their republican atheism, a fatal ground of promotion when the said form of orthodoxy presupposes a substantial share of human stupidity. With the same graphic force, with the same transcendental authority, with the same glow, Churchill depicts scene after scene of the stupendous drama, from the moment when the British Fleet steamed up to Scapa Flow on his sole initiative, to the hour on the morning of November 11th, 1918, when he waited in his office for Big Ben to announce the beginning of the Armistice, with thoughts already revolving round the many insoluble problems of the unfamiliar peace, but, at the first stroke, overwhelmed for a moment by an indescribable feeling midway between tears and exultation.

It is a modern Iliad, almost as proud as the Greek. The highest manifestations of human intelligence, the sublimest efforts of the human will are set forth with a vigour and a liveliness which could not be more intense. Technicalities and calculations have become poetry. This monumental work has become what it is because it is written not by an observer at a distance in time and place, but by the representative of the war

generation, not with a view to obtaining literary immortality for its author but to spur a tired people to fresh efforts beyond their powers. It is a harsh wind that blows in *The World Crisis*. It is evident that its author considers that the afflictions described will by no means be the last or the most frightful. The coming generation will be put to yet harder proof in the coming war. Winston Churchill is not more hopeful than the pessimists of the Middle Ages: *ave crux spes unica*.

This is a gloomy outlook. Fortunately prophets who are less exacting are not wanting; at least in Sweden we still find the highest manifestation of humanity in a lyrical meditation or in philological commentaries upon an Attic inscription.

STATESMEN

I

LORD PALMERSTON

AFTER the elegant Metternich had made his exit and before the somewhat less elegant Bismarck made his entry, Lord Palmerston was the first violin of the European concert. He had, whatever else may be said of him, a certain dexterity in drawing the bow. He was a Lord of the Admiralty in 1807 and War Secretary in 1809, and, during the fifty-six years which followed, it was only for brief intervals that he was absent from the Cabinet. When he left for good in the autumn of 1865, there was no one who could remember a time when Lord Palmerston was not at the head of affairs. He was a Minister of George III and gave dinners for the captivating consort of Edward VII. His oldest friends were born in the beginning of the eighteenth century and some of his later acquaintances are still alive to-day.

Palmerston's biography contains so much of the history of Europe that the undertaking has been long delayed, and the recent book about him did not appear till the autumn of 1926. It is the work of Philip Guedalla, a learned and somewhat precious historian. It is a well-informed and conscientious work which, however, would have been still better

if the author had not at every moment been anxious to display himself as a wit and epigrammatist. And this is to be regretted inasmuch as Palmerston is an acquaintance worth making by all and sundry. We Swedes in particular have cause to remember him with friendly feelings. He was in general a friend to the small nations, but to Sweden he wished especially well, in spite of the fact that Karl XV's English gave him a good deal of trouble. If he could have managed the Crimean War in his own way, Åland and Finland would have been restored to Sweden, and in conversations with Napoleon III he pleaded for a restoration of the ancient power of Sweden in view of her historic mission as a bulwark against Russia.

As he was, moreover, an uncommonly picturesque and charming figure it may perhaps be considered legitimate to linger for a moment before the profile which Philip Guedalla so clearly presents.

Henry John Temple was born in 1784. He became Lord Palmerston in the peerage of Ireland at the age of eighteen, when his father died leaving a wife and child well provided for. The young Henry John was an intelligent and lively boy, although more attracted to the study of life than to that of books. He had the excellent upbringing of the English aristocracy of that time; the usual foreign travels had to be omitted on account of the disturbed state of the world, but he learned to speak French and Italian fluently. Otherwise everything went as it should; he paid a somewhat divided attention to the lectures of his professors, hunted, dined and flirted. He was agreeable and not very ambitious, decidedly more concerned with pleasure than with glory, and in the natural course of events

he became a Lord of the Admiralty at the age of twenty-three. In this capacity he made so little fuss about himself and appeared so safe that two years later he was offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Very wisely the young aristocrat declined the flattering offer, and in compensation he received the portfolio of Secretary of State for War.

The twenty-five-year-old chief of the English War Office had among other tasks that of rendering Napoleon harmless. What Napoleon thought of his new opponent is not known to us; Palmerston on his side did not worry his head overmuch about Napoleon. He had obtained an office which afforded him an agreeable social standing and a not contemptible income; he meant to attend to it carefully, but that it should engross the whole of his interest was too much to ask. On the plain by Wagram the cry "*vive l'Empereur*" rose to heaven, and then the pictures in the peep-show changed incessantly until the battleship *Northumberland* disappeared on the horizon on its way to a little island in the South Atlantic, but Palmerston was not particularly fascinated by the queer exhibition. He busied himself with administrative details, adjusted the accounts, applied to the Commons for votes, suggested changes in the matter of uniform, appointed a regimental chaplain to Curaçoa, carried on as in time of peace and saw that routine was not disturbed.

When in the spring of 1815 the echo reached London of the menacing song which was suddenly set up everywhere from Grenoble to Paris: "*Bon! Bon! Napoleon—Va rentrer dans sa maison!*" Palmerston's calm was not so much as ruffled. It

was a matter of sending out Wellington again; for his part he had no occasion to worry himself about the affairs of Poland.

Palmerston had, in fact, outside his office, affairs of his own which were decidedly as interesting as high politics. He had made the acquaintance of the young Lady Cowper, *née* Lamb, whose eyes caused him entirely to forget the exploits of Napoleon. All the Lambs were handsome, but Lord Cowper's wife was undoubtedly one of the loveliest women in England. Lawrence has painted a portrait of her in her radiant youth which is always sure to call forth a gratified expression in the eyes of every masculine beholder. As she was, moreover, highly intelligent, and as Lord Cowper was a very complaisant husband, Lord Palmerston's infatuation was not a passing episode. When the work of the War Office was over for the day he rode to Cowper House, where he was accepted as the legitimate adorer and was honoured with the pet name of Cupid. He drew Cupids and wrote verses, neither of them of great merit. But he was lovable and boyish, and Lady Cowper became deeply attached to him and determined to make a great man of Napoleon's opponent.

It did not happen all at once. The years passed one after the other, and Palmerston remained Secretary at War, but showed no tendency to develop from placeman into statesman. His political views were somewhat undecided. Nominally he was a Tory, but he displayed a distressing incapacity for regarding things from orthodox points of view. But, in Lady Cowper's eyes, this was not necessarily due to a want of talent. He was not an outstanding speaker in Parliament but,

on the other hand, he spoke very entertainingly in Lady Cowper's drawing-room. He continued to be only moderately interested in the political debates, but at the War Office he gradually discovered that the exercise of power was associated with uncommonly pleasant sensations. It was amusing to control and manage, it was amusing to command people, it was amusing to be obeyed. It dawned upon Palmerston that it was amusing to govern, just as amusing as to eat one's dinner, almost—though not quite—as amusing as to sit and look at Lady Cowper. It was an important discovery. For the most necessary attribute of a statesman is perhaps not the desire to serve one political idea or another but just the desire to govern.

In the eighteen twenties Palmerston attached himself to Canning, the brilliant Tory who was really a Whig. Palmerston shared his sympathies and antipathies. He had no warm feelings for the Holy Alliance; he was a sceptic of the eighteenth century, with a contempt for exuberance in theories and phrases. When in 1828 he resigned from the War Office he was already nominally a Whig and he joined the next Whig Government in 1830, this time as Foreign Secretary.

Palmerston got on capitally with his new duties. Home politics were full of a mass of hair-splitting distinctions between the Tory and the Whig points of view, of pettinesses and quibblings; Foreign policy was concerned with facts. In that field it was a question of action, there was someone to browbeat; there was occasion to govern and to show his power. With an amused air Palmerston went to the Foreign Office of a morning. Lady Cowper smiled; her adorer began to attract notice.

There was first of all Metternich, whom Palmerston was strongly inclined to harass. It was soon done. After the July revolution the world everywhere was a little upset, and Metternich soon noticed that Palmerston had other views than his as to the causes of the discords. It was sufficiently disquieting that England should mix herself up in a peculiarly inconvenient manner in the endless Carlist struggles, it was outrageous that the same nation, once allied with Austria, should countenance and support the Italian revolutionaries. Palmerston had in general a noteworthy capacity for seeing things from the non-philosophic side. It was already an established dogma that Turkey was a rotten State, ripe for its fall. "Nonsense," said Palmerston, "half our mistakes arise from the use of bad metaphors. People suppose that a State is the same as a tree which must wither and die at an appointed time. This is pure and unadulterated nonsense." In order to show the justice of his contention he took Turkey's part against Russia so very vigorously that people in England began to be afraid of war. "Nonsense," said Palmerston again, "the nations are like the French, who scream about '*nos frontières*,' but who, when it comes to the test, are careful enough about the cash outlay which war involves." Palmerston was in the right again, for the only consequences of his policy were outcries and laments and an increased respect for England.

Thus passed the eighteen thirties in great contentment. Lady Cowper's brother, Lord Melbourne, became Prime Minister, but Palmerston remained in his office. A little Princess became Queen of England, and Palmerston amused her

with malicious anecdotes about her many royal relatives. Lord Cowper died, and Lady Cowper became Lady Palmerston. His colleagues in the Cabinet groaned under the strain of industrial and social problems, but Palmerston, who had chosen the better part, throve better and better every day.

Later in the eighteen forties a cloud began to arise in the heavens. During several years Palmerston was out of office, but when Peel fell he once more became Foreign Secretary. By that time, however, a new force had asserted itself in English politics, a force which was not of a nature to commend itself to Lord Palmerston. This was the Prince Consort, the energetic and scientifically trained young Prince who devoted his life to useless endeavours to impose culture upon England. At first he did all he could to convert Palmerston from his unprincipled policy, unprincipled craving for pleasure and unprincipled indifference to spiritual values. He took him for excursions, showed him fossils and remarkable minerals, talked to him about philosophy and geology. The English statesman bowed and said, "Very interesting," but his air betokened inattention. It was a relief to Palmerston when an important telegram called him away from the princely lectures.

He knew very well how to govern. "It is to be done," he said, "by arousing hope and driving out fear. We have our interests; that is our only permanent principle. Enemies and friends interchange according to the circumstances." That sounded quite natural to Palmerston; to Prince Albert it sounded little better than blasphemy. He supposed politics to be applied philosophy. During

the time which followed it was war to the knife between Palmerston and those whom he called "the people at Osborne." Palmerston was the stronger, as Victoria, Albert and their royal relatives all over Europe soon had occasion to find out to their cost.

In 1846 Palmerston suffered a political defeat. Queen Isabella of Spain had become marriageable —the most indiscreet telegram had reached Paris from Madrid : "*la reine est nubile depuis deux heures*" —and the astute Louis Philippe, who, to avoid rousing ill feeling, had married his son not to her but to her younger sister, succeeded in arranging for her to obtain a husband whose constitution was such that the succession to the throne must presently fall to the offspring of her sister and of the son of Louis Philippe. Palmerston was annoyed as Foreign Secretary and man of the world, and was in a mood to take vengeance on the whole company. He would show these royalties in how little security they sat.

During the years of revolution at the end of the eighteen forties Palmerston had a finger in almost every pie. He did not support the Hungarians, partly because he did not feel drawn to them, partly because he regarded the existence of Austria as politically necessary; he said once that if Austria did not exist one would have to invent it. But in Italy, Germany and France the revolutionaries could count on Palmerston's support. But for his intervention several Princes would have remained yet for many years in undisputed possession of their thrones.

He made himself independent of Victoria and Albert by showing them the drafts of his despatches

for the first time—after they were sent. It was no use to protest, for Palmerston had become popular. The conservative English had always been revolutionary for other nations, and Palmerston's policy was in harmony with the English national temper. It is clear that things are not as they should be abroad; only in England is it best as it is. Palmerston had learned to speak in Parliament; he spoke as he conversed in private, wittily, unceremoniously and genially. He was beginning to appear as an incarnation of John Bull. For Victoria and Albert there remained only the hope that other worlds would be a little better arranged and that the future life would be less full of bitter trials.

At every blow which Palmerston delivered his self-assurance and that of the English nation grew. When once he castigated the Greeks rather severely because they had handled not very tenderly a Gibraltar, born Jewish usurer, he defended himself by saying that anyone born under the protection of the British Flag ought to be able to say: "civis romanus sum." The English clapped their hands; other nations sighed with the Germans: "*Hat der Teufel einen Sohn—So ist er sicher Palmerston.*" He himself grew more cheerful every year. Before the day's work he rode at the gallop in Hyde Park and, in the evening, thoroughly enjoyed his dinner, while opposite to him at table a pair of great dark eyes shone with pride over his latest exploit.

In December 1851 he went too far. Contrary to the orders of the Queen and the Prime Minister he recognised in the name of England the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III. He was forced to resign. The Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, assured Queen

Victoria that he was too old to get on his feet again. A year had not passed before he once more sat in the Cabinet as Home Secretary.

As such he further increased his popularity; he was too old to share the respect of nineteenth-century people either for capitalistic or for socialistic institutions, and dealt royally and wisely with questions of sanitation and the protection of the workers. This kept him fully occupied till the Crimean War broke out, and in 1855, at the age of seventy-one, he became Prime Minister.

The Crimean War had, as we know, not gone quite as was hoped. Those in charge lost courage. Only Palmerston was his old self. He knew that the English always begin a war by losing it and end by winning it, and, like another jovial statesman in a later war, he inspired courage solely by his physiognomy. All, including Victoria and Albert, forgot old injuries and reconciled themselves with their old enemy. The only misfortune was that the allies on the other side of the Channel grew prematurely tired before the fruit was ripe for plucking. At the conclusion of peace Palmerston received the Garter, but would have preferred to see Russia on her knees. But the English were glad that the adventure had not ended even worse than it did, and gave Palmerston the credit. *Punch* honoured him by a long poem in which it was asserted that " since the day of the Patriarchs ne'er was seen—A head so grey with heart so green," and all England joined in the refrain :

" Sing hey, my brisk John Palmerston !
Sing ho, my blithe Lord Palmerston !
Let Tory and Radical own they have none
To compare with my jaunty John Palmerston."

The world was changed, but old Pam was the same as ever. That was enough in the eyes of his countrymen. Lord Derby became Prime Minister for a short time and then Palmerston came back again. The eighteen fifties passed and the eighteen sixties came in their place, but old Pam was still there. Gladstone and Disraeli fought their duel and Palmerston looked on at the youths of fifty with an amused smile. When Gladstone suffered defeat Palmerston patted him on the shoulder: "Naturally you are mortified and disappointed, but your disappointment is nothing compared with mine; I hoped to win the Derby and my horse failed at the last minute." Gladstone did not appreciate the frivolity, but the great public did. They knew that the old jester understood what he was about, and when Palmerston appeared on horseback, upright as a boy, they threw their hats in the air.

In 1861 Albert departed. "But Lord Palmerston is still there," thought Victoria perhaps, not without a pang of envy in her heart, when she saw her Minister, fresh and brisk and buoyant, clad in bright and variegated colours. An embittered struggle with the tenacious Pam awaited her over the Schleswig-Holstein question. "Only three people," said Palmerston, "have really understood the Schleswig-Holstein question—the Prince Consort who is dead, a German professor who has gone mad, and I who have forgotten all about it." Victoria observed, however, that the knowledge of the deceased Albert was to be found preserved unaltered in her own memory, and was determined to act in accordance with it. She got her own way, though after having to swallow various reminders from

Palmerston to the effect that she was an English Queen and not a German Princess. That Palmerston did not intervene in favour of Denmark was due to the circumstance that he failed to get Napoleon III on his side and that the Cabinet was in favour of peace. To send 20,000 Englishmen without the support of French troops against 200,000 Germans and Austrians was too risky an affair even for this undaunted old gentleman. He retrieved himself in America, where sundry States had reason to find that his hand had not grown less firm with the years.

In the autumn of 1864 he celebrated his eightieth birthday. In the following spring he invited to dinner the Speaker of the House of Commons, who was a little uneasy when he saw his host begin with two plates of turtle soup, go on to a large helping of cod and oyster sauce, a pâté, two entrées, several slices of roast mutton, a big thick slice of ham, and bring the whole to an end with a portion of roast pheasant. Palmerston, however, throve excellently on this diet; he was used to it from the days of his youth. In the spring of 1865 he was brisker than ever, worked at full pressure and made the House of Commons laugh by his witticisms.

In the summer he took a little holiday on his estate. Two young couples were his guests, and he took the arm of Lady Palmerston, Em, as he called her, saying, "Here we are, three pairs of lovers." But he was a little tired sometimes, and when one starlit night they were wondering whether after death they would come to inhabit some of the other suns of the firmament, Palmerston said that it certainly was possible, but that he would like first

to have "a time of repose after the action and fatigue of this life."

In October he was taken ill. The Queen sent to inquire after his condition and was informed: "It is very kind of Her Majesty; I am much better." But the end was near, and he knew it. On the 16th of October he breakfasted on mutton chops and port and expressed his wonder that he "should have lived so long without discovering what a good breakfast is like." It was, however, his last good breakfast. He had lived contentedly and found life glorious; he lay content and calm and waited for repose. Em sat silent at his bedside, and his dim gaze sought hers. He had been a conqueror in life's battle and had won many prizes, the praise of the world, love and fear, triumph over powerful adversaries, the homage of the English people; he had rejoiced in cabals and in war, enjoyed himself at the Council board and at the dinner-table, and now, before it failed, his gaze met a pair of eyes which he knew to be the loveliest in England. He could die with a sigh of contentment. He drew it early in the morning of the 18th of October, two days before his eighty-second birthday.

At his grave John Bull was the only mourner, but his was a genuine grief.

II

LORD FISHER

ALL the world—as the saying is—knows that Lord Fisher is the creator of the modern English Fleet. Many will doubtless remember his appearance from Nicholson's famous woodcut: a furrowed and weather-bitten face with the corners of the mouth deeply drawn down, the expression crabbed and cross-grained, and the attitude, with the folded arms *à la* Napoleon, distinctly repellent; in the background is seen dimly an inlet of the North Sea with a Dreadnought and some gulls discernible in the grey light. The man undoubtedly looks exceedingly imposing, but he scarcely invites any nearer acquaintanceship, especially not for him who has heard dark rumours of how he contrived to make life a hell for that half of the personnel of the English Fleet of which he disapproved. Outside England there are probably few who know a great deal more about Lord Fisher.

That, however, is a pity, for Lord Fisher is actually one of the most valuable acquaintances that it is possible to make. It is, as a matter of fact, now possible for anyone to know him as intimately as only very few had the chance of doing in the days of his activity. The men who shape the history of the world contrive in general to take their personal secrets with them to the

grave; such, for example, is Fisher's contemporary, the creator of the English million army, who is always the same enigma. Neither Sir George Arthur's voluminous biography nor Lord Esher's sensational and piquant disclosures have succeeded in throwing any light worth mentioning upon that mystery, Kitchener. With Fisher it is otherwise. In his old age—when he was nearly eighty—he dictated to a secretary a multitude of memories, naval reflections and miscellaneous maxims which were collected in two volumes: *Memories* and *Records*. The reputation of a book never, it is true, stands in direct proportion to its value, but it is nevertheless astonishing that these two volumes could be published without arousing an extraordinary sensation; they have not even attained the honour and dignity of a second edition. *Memories* and *Records* have, however, a value, both as historical and as psychological documents, which cannot be over-estimated. Written with unparalleled frankness, they not only supply an account of the formation of the British Fleet, but also give the best conceivable picture of the force-factor known as Lord Fisher's personality. In these pages one of the most original and impressive characters of the present day is revealed in all its radiant splendour.

Fisher was the godson of Lady Wilmot Horton, of whom Byron wrote: "She walks in beauty like the night." That is his sole connection with æsthetics; he himself came, throughout life, to dwell in a considerably harsher atmosphere. In 1854, at the age of only thirteen, he took his place in the ranks of British sailors, having previously undergone a sort of examination in which he was

successful in the appointed tests; to be able to do the rule of three, to say the Lord's Prayer by heart and to swallow a glass of sherry without blinking. But, if the entrance examination was easy, the school, on the other hand, was very much harder; for a number of years Fisher toiled like a dog on all the seas of the globe, but by the time he was nineteen he was cruising in the China Sea, as Lieutenant and Officer Commanding, in the ship *Coromandel*. It was not an altogether agreeable command, inasmuch as the boat was by no means first-rate and had difficulty in extricating herself from both squalls and pirates, but neither fevers nor bullets affected the young Lieutenant, who soon became known as a tough one—about the best thing that can be said of anyone who has war for his profession. So Fisher got on very rapidly. At the age of forty he commanded the biggest ship in the British Fleet and already had his breast covered with medals and stars. In 1892 he became Third Sea Lord, in 1904 First Sea Lord. During the next six years he carried through—in the face of the combined opposition of the majority in the Government, in Parliament and at the Admiralty—the reforms thanks to which England won the World War. In order to understand how this could be done one must consider a little more closely Lord Fisher's personality; for the rest, it is, as we have said, an amusing and profitable occupation from other points of view.

Lord Fisher's theory of life calls naturally to mind that of the Swedish major who once summed up his opinion on the respective value of human virtues in the monumental phrase: "Next to marksmanship I consider the fear of God to be the

foremost virtue of a soldier." Fisher, who was endowed by nature with an uncommonly strong physique and an uncommonly strong will, had absolutely only two interests in life: first the British Fleet and then religion. In happy moments he contrived to go so far as to identify war with Christianity, and attained then the complete harmony which almost always enables a man to succeed in what he has to do. Fisher once declared that, if his own brother stood in the way of the realisation of a naval reform, he would strike him down and stride on over the corpse. If he had too strictly differentiated between God and Dreadnoughts, this view would sometimes have brought him into inward conflict, but his inmost conviction was that the Bible and the British guns were phenomena which, though separate in human eyes, were one in the sight of God. Yet, sometimes, when, after a hard day's work, he sat alone and read his Bible, he may have felt that, to be on the safe side, a formula was needed in case anyone should wish to suggest a doubt whether the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount constitute the best method of carrying on war. He found such an one in the words:

> "Thou shalt not kill, but need'st not strive
> Officiously to keep alive."

And thus he certainly finds nothing inwardly inconsistent in this confession: "No one can be more in favour of the Sermon on the Mount than I am, but if a strutting fool comes along, I say, 'Go to ——.'"

There are, however, plenty of fools in this world, and Lord Fisher had abundant occasion to use strong language. His manner of speech can best

be understood from what King Edward said when he stood chatting about a number of naval details: "Would you kindly leave off shaking your fists in my face." Some of the basic rules of Fisherian ethics deserve to be quoted in the original: "Hit first! Hit hard! Keep on Hitting!! (the three H's). The three Requisites for success—Ruthless, Relentless, Remorseless (the three R's). The essence of War is Violence, Moderation in War is Imbecility."

Fisher's complete one-sidedness and ruthlessness form, of course, the foundation of his genius. Men of genius are always demoniacal natures, says Goethe positively, and Fisher was not only demoniacal, sometimes he was pure demon, as those around him had occasion to know to their cost. Others have their preoccupations; one thinks of money, one thinks of pleasure, one thinks of property, one thinks of reputation, one thinks of his relatives, one thinks of his friends—Fisher thought of nothing in the world but the British navy. His in a way almost saintly unselfishness, which is the most obviously Christian trait in his character, contributed no less to make him forget everything except the naval problem. In *Records* Fisher writes that "the holy man," Saint Francis, summed up all religion and Christlike living in the words, "How we stand in the sight of God—that is the only thing that matters." To be in the sight of God, that for Fisher was to devote days and nights to the provision and improvement of Dreadnoughts and submarines. England was indeed, as, during the dark years of the war, he was wont to inculcate, in actual fact nothing else but the lost tribes of Israel, and when he prayed, "Thy will

be done," he did so in the certainty that the God of Israel could not but be on the side of His people.

In this spirit he approached his task. There was a struggle in which Fisher did not precisely wear his Sunday trousers or silk gloves. The British navy had, since the latter half of the nineteenth century, been in anything but an ideal condition. It was controlled from London by conscientious bureaucrats and seemed mainly to exist for the purpose of supplying well-connected naval officers with agreeable exercise in picturesque tropical localities. Fisher detested bureaucrats and theoretical experts with his whole heart. In his view all theory was "Damned nonsense"; reality was only properly apprehended by the instinct of genius in perilous situations. The true admiral was the one who chucked the orders of the Admiralty into the waste-paper basket and, at his own risk, annexed islands and sank enemy ships. War and prayer were the only manly occupations; the officer who has risen on the ground of his supposed theoretic proficiency ought as soon as possible to be got rid of.

One of Fisher's favourite sayings is Napoleon's "*la carrière ouverte aux talents.*" It is a principle which had been very slightly recognised in England, but one of Fisher's aims was to apply it in the matter of promotions in the navy. As soon as he had attained a strong position he began a weeding out among his subordinates; those who were so protected by powerful relatives that they could not be directly removed he circumvented by the method of making life so hard for them that they found it best to resign voluntarily. Fisher became at last so

hated by society that among "the upper ten" no one but King Edward dared mention his name without crossing himself. Just as uncompromisingly he favoured anyone in whom he believed that he found traces of what he called the Nelson touch; he was naturally accused of injustice, but was instantly ready with the answer that favouritism is the quintessence of war. Injustice—what is it? The only thing which matters is the navy, and where its interests are promoted by injustice, very well, injustice is the only right.

And the Fisher system undeniably proved to have its advantages for the navy. If Fisher had contented himself with creating Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts and cruisers and submarines and brilliant sailors, the Government and Parliament and the Press would certainly have grumbled at the formidable bills which he presented, but Fisher was not satisfied with that. To him there seemed to be a gap in the distribution of the Fleet which, in the eyes of the wary, was more dangerous than anything else. Fisher resolutely demanded to be allowed to direct English Foreign policy.

Fisher was the only Englishman who foresaw the World War a couple of decades before it broke out. While diplomats were mainly engaged in attempting to adjust the perpetually recurring disputes with France, Fisher had entirely satisfied himself that England's real enemy was Germany. King Edward had a presentiment that he was right, but no one else in England. When Fisher insisted that the newly-created British Fleet should be stationed in the North Sea, not only did the officers, who thought it would be very much pleasanter to cruise in the blue Mediterranean, protest, but also

the statesmen who feared that Germany would understand the actual significance of the measure and who did not see the least occasion to protect themselves against their kinsmen beyond the Rhine. Fisher spoke and wrote, gesticulated and swore, threatened and defied and, as he was inexhaustible and his opponents were not, he succeeded even on that point in driving through his will; of what this was to mean in the year 1914 there is no need to speak.

But Fisher had bigger schemes than this. As soon as he had got his fleet more or less ready he was prepared to make use of it and, from the time he became First Sea Lord, he was all on fire for his plan to—as he said—"Copenhagen the German Fleet." Russia and Turkey were, in his opinion, the only States whose friendship England ought to seek; Russia, he wrote in 1908, ought to fortify the Åland islands and use them as a base; in alliance with Russia England should surprise Germany and sink every ship with the German flag at its masthead. King Edward would perhaps have been inclined to follow this advice, but the English Government was pro-German. Fisher develops his whole philosophy; might is right; the stronger cause is the better; if we do not take our opportunity now, God removes His hand from us; hit quickly, hit hard, hit often; with every year Germany grows stronger and it is more humane to take the opportunity when the struggle may still be of short duration. Fisher, as we know, had to give way on this point, but the perpetual menace had its effect in inducing the Cabinet to agree to gigantic armaments in order to escape the calamities which he threatened. They knew as a matter of

fact that Fisher was quite capable of beginning war on his own account.

This war demon was a singularly peaceable human being. This sounds a little strange but is none the less true for that. It is impossible to go far in the reading of *Memories* and *Records* without clearly perceiving that the foundation of Fisher's nature was kindness. When for a moment he was not directly concerned with the Fleet and its affairs, the man became indescribably lovable. He did not get much friendliness in life, but the little he got he repaid many times over. His naïve love for King Edward is pathetic; the more so that it is accompanied by a complete unconsciousness of the fact that a King is anything more than an ordinary human being. When driving in a carriage with King Edward in London, he was capable of getting up and waving to a young girl whose father he knew, an unheard-of breach of etiquette which could hardly have been committed by anyone else. At official dinners with Emperors and Kings he could get up and offer to sing a popular song; he could propose dancing a jig with the sister of the Tsar of Russia. He showed the same spontaneous simplicity with old fishermen and market women and indeed anyone with whom he came in contact outside the affairs of the service. "Sweet" is an expression which he constantly uses; it is applied to men and beasts and flowers and occurrences. It has become fashionable to be cynical; a modern humanist would doubtless find Fisher sentimental.

Fisher's piety indeed becomes a little queer when it is coupled with his naval programme; apart from that it is exceptionally pure and sincere. It was not only with the help of guns that he sought

to practise Christianity; he did so also by keeping his heart pure, by benevolence, and by an indifference to money which is almost unexampled. Of his contemporaries the one whom he most admired was Ralph Inge, England's foremost living religious personality. His God is not only Jehovah the Lord of Hosts, although doubtless it is Him whom he most often invokes—Fisher is at the same time capable of appreciating the mystic. "*Que Dieu éclaire les heures que je perds*"—so runs one of his favourite phrases. And he was in the habit of quoting one of Pascal's most famous aphorisms which should be borne in mind when one charges Fisher with inconsistency: "*Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connait point.*"

In 1910 Fisher was obliged to give up his position as First Sea Lord. Without doubt he felt then that England was lost, particularly as he clearly understood that, inasmuch as he had not been able to begin the war when it suited England, Germany would begin it at the moment convenient for the German army and fleet. With singular accuracy Fisher foretold a couple of years before the World War broke out that it would be in August 1914. But the next year, 1911, the situation cleared; Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty, and in him Fisher knew that there was a man after his own heart. Fisher even had the satisfaction of presiding over the Committee which arranged for the substitution of oil for coal in the British navy.

Soon after the outbreak of war Fisher once more became First Sea Lord. When Sturdee sank von Spee's fleet and Beatty won the victory on the Dogger Bank, the value of Fisher's reforms was made manifest. But Fisher's satisfaction was not

of long duration. His opinion was that the only way to bring the war to an end was an attack from the Baltic; when this—chiefly out of consideration for Denmark and Sweden—was declared by the Cabinet to be impossible, Fisher was induced to support Churchill in the Dardanelles adventure. Immediately after that catastrophe he tendered his resignation.

The long war years were bitter. Fisher, who had been called the war demon, was infinitely shocked by the unending slaughter; his Fleet was mostly engaged in police work. When Tirpitz was dismissed, Fisher wrote a tragi-comic letter to "dear old Tirps," and assured him of his friendship "till Hell freezes." He understood that, when Tirpitz was prevented from carrying on the U-boat war all the time and in earnest, the German Government were guilty of the same mistake as the English when they hindered *his* bold plans, and Fisher was free from war psychoses.

The result of the war, said Fisher, strengthened him in his faith in Providence. If God had removed His hand England would have gone under many times over; its military and naval leaders he regarded, in fact, as for the most part ripe for execution. He himself had come to be almost forgotten. Admiral Beatty became "Baron of the North Sea." Fisher saw it without envy, but he certainly felt it a little unfair that Kitchener should find his grave in his own beloved water, while he himself was left to grow leaky ashore.

Fisher never asked for official recognition, but it gratified him when an admiral of the old school wrote to him after the war and said that the victory was his work, adding that he ought not for all

that to be puffed up since he was only clay in the hands of the Great Potter. Fisher himself once expressed the wish that, when he died, the man in the street should feel that he had done something which was worth an honest thank you, something like General Booth. It is doubtful whether the wish was realised, but it had deserved to be so, for Fisher's significance is, in the real meaning of the word, popular. A poor old woman once asked a friend of Fisher's why Nelson should stand with his lions in Trafalgar Square. He informed her that but for Nelson the bread which she bought for a penny would cost threepence. One can say now that she has Fisher to thank for her cheap bread. But in either period such services seem not to be highly valued.

III

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

LLOYD GEORGE belongs to history. He does so in two senses. It is, of course, unsafe to prophesy, but, whatever may be the result of the next General Election in England, it is hardly probable that Mr. Lloyd George will rule England again. He is probably aware of this himself. Those who are in his confidence speak of the profound bitterness which he tries to conceal from the public. He is a fallen king. Such followers as he can still muster are neither trustworthy nor considerable. He can still attract notice by a speech or an article, but the attention of the Press is a poor compensation for the loss of power. It is not to be wondered at that this should embitter a man who has played the leading part in one of the most dramatic scenes in the history of the world.

Lloyd George belongs to history in yet another sense. Last year there appeared a pompous and panegyrical biography of the *mondain* French President, Paul Deschanel, a book which it is impossible to read without being impressed by the power of time to alter perspectives, without realising that political greatness, like the illusion of Prospero, often vanishes and leaves not the smallest trace behind it. The traces of Lloyd George in the history of the world are likely to be perceptible

even by a very remote posterity. The waterways of the jungle are covered with tracks, but a downpour soon washes away those of the beasts of prey and of the deer. Those of the elephant, however, remain, though filled with twigs and leaves, and for long after show the hunter where the mighty beast has passed. Under all the accumulated rubbish the historian of the future will follow the track of that power for good and evil which was called David Lloyd George. He has succeeded in much, failed in still more; the importance of his successes and failures can hardly be over-estimated.

The significance of Lloyd George is by no means that which the majority of his admirers and traducers ascribe to him. It does not rest upon his activities in the sphere of social legislation; indeed it is open to question whether his political ideas have been particularly original or productive. Neither does it rest upon his record as an organiser of war and a negotiator of peace. A competent judge who, in other respects, is no admirer of his, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, once said that no human being had done so much as Lloyd George to win the World War; and perhaps he was right, for Lloyd George bears a very large share of the responsibility for the Peace of Versailles and its consequences. Yet, in the final estimate of Lloyd George's significance, the most important factor is not this but another which can be perceived more clearly now that some years have passed since his fall. For a number of years he governed England more absolutely and with less dependence upon Parliament than anyone since the days of Cromwell. When he fell the Opposition, which for two hundred years had been the underlying

principle of English politics, had practically ceased to exist. That stage in the history of England which began with the glorious revolution came to an end with Lloyd George. It was a stage which, although split up into a number of periods of varying import, derives a certain unity from the constant opposition between two parties struggling for power by parliamentary methods. The rise and growth of the Labour Party would perhaps have compelled a development such as we have witnessed; but that this development in England came about as rapidly as it did, that it was almost completed at the psychological moment, was at least to some extent due to the historical factor known as the personality of Lloyd George. When he fell this work was finished and he himself became superfluous. At the present moment he would willingly have it otherwise, but that is of small importance. He has never acted upon any settled plan, he has never considered the implications and consequences of his actions. The attribute which, in spite of everything, made him great was his realism, his intuitive apprehension of the actual. Thanks to this attribute, which he possessed in a higher degree than any of his contemporaries, he succeeded, at the summit of his career, in doing what no one else could have done. With one stroke he drew a thick line across the whole of the political ideology which it had taken two centuries to evolve.

It is chiefly on this ground that Lloyd George commands interest outside England; and he still has a function to fulfil as an example in countries whose political atmosphere remains clouded by the smoke of burnt-out fires.

Lloyd George is no Englishman. He is the typical Celt, a descendant of a people of whom it is said that they give vent to their melancholy in song and their gladness in battle. The rigid, unapproachable Englishman is, in fact, sentimental, impressionable and fettered by a thousand considerations and prejudices. One who knows Lloyd George well[1] has compared him with the islands off the Finnish coast. Outwardly they appear smiling and inviting; they are covered with flowers and trees; but in reality the soil is shallow, and beneath it is nothing but granite. Under the surface, behind the smiling, the jocularity, the amiability, the softness, Lloyd George is as hard as diamond; he is a more ruthless personality than Kitchener or Cecil Rhodes. His pliancy and his insensitiveness are racial characteristics, but they have been intensified by his upbringing, which was in every way so different from that of other English politicians.

Lloyd George's father, William George, was a talented, unpractical and not very successful schoolmaster. When he died in 1864 he left his wife and children completely destitute. The son, David Lloyd, was then one and a half years old, and not long after another boy, William, was born. Mrs. George and her boys took refuge with her brother Richard Lloyd, the shoemaker at Llanystumdwy in North Wales. This Richard Lloyd was a poor man, a capable workman and a strict, zealous and convinced member of a Baptist sect called "The Disciples of Christ." Though a sincerely religious man, one of the elect, he was, as Dissenters go, quite broadminded, for all his conviction that the

[1] Mr. E. T. Raymond in his excellent book, *Mr. Lloyd George*.

Established Church and the Tory Party were the work of Satan. His impartiality was such that, firmly as he believed in the certainty of the rich being ultimately cast into hell, he by no means expected all the poor to go to heaven. He was a man who understood life and human nature and, in spite of trials and privations, remained always upright, dignified and charitable.

Richard Lloyd was not one of the poorest in his village, so he was able to keep his nephew more decently clothed than his comrades. The young David had by no means an unhappy childhood. He could eat his fill, even if meat and eggs were rare indulgences. He was not without aptitude for devotion and, at a tender age, delighted his uncle by his natural gift for preaching. He drove a little donkey cart, loaded with shoes, to his uncle's customers and, when no elders were there to see, he stole apples and fought with other boys. He was an intelligent, lively and good-looking boy with a great capacity for accommodating himself to all sorts of surroundings, eminent in biblical knowledge and in mischief.

In order to understand Lloyd George one must see him against this background. The life which he knew as a child and as a schoolboy was one of honest labour, a constant grinding struggle to earn his daily bread, varied by psalm singing in his dissenting chapel. In after years he learned to associate with multi-millionaires and to keep his psalm book shut except on the most solemn occasions, but these two early experiences have been the only serious influences in his life. He could not understand the importance which well-to-do people attach to convictions, to the ties of friend-

ship, to theoretical and social conventions of all kinds. Contempt for such considerations is not a luxury; it is an unavoidable necessity from which the only means of escape is the possession of wealth. He belonged to the middle classes, but to that part of them which is engaged in a life-and-death struggle to avoid sinking into the lower. When the struggle was over Lloyd George had grown hard. He came to be on friendly terms with peers and captains of industry, but it did not occur to him to regard these friendships as anything but a convenience which he might sacrifice at any moment to his political interests. He became Radical and Liberal, Imperialist, pacifist and war-leader, but it never occurred to him that party programmes and political creeds could be anything more than conventions of the moment which might be changed the next moment for others. For one who had accustomed himself to sacrifice reputation and comfort in order to procure the necessaries of life for himself and his family it became, later on, an easy matter to sacrifice parties and convictions in order to win a war. Lloyd George was schooled in the realism of poverty, and has retained the cynicism which it taught him, though tempered by the religious sense which has never quite deserted him, and by his natural good-humour.

Most ways to success were closed to the young Lloyd George for economic reasons. He was and still is a great reader; his pretence of ignorance is really nothing but a pose which he adopted because he found it suitable. As a boy he taught himself, unaided, a certain amount of French; he soon read it easily but found the pronunciation a more difficult

matter, and he has consequently never been able to understand any other French pronunciation than Lord Grey's, which unhappily is, in its turn, incomprehensible to a Frenchman. A liberal education was out of the question, but it was possible for Richard Lloyd, by extreme exertion, to afford his nephew the opportunity of passing the examinations which qualified him to practise as a solicitor. That was not a very long business, and at sixteen years of age Lloyd George was ready to practise law. He could not expect any clients but the poor, who had not the means to retain the costlier, if more learned, services of counsel; but by industry and care he managed to earn his daily bread.

Lloyd George was still a mere boy when, over the signature "Brutus," he made his début as a political writer in a little Radical Welsh newspaper. His enthusiasm was genuine if not always very well judged. He regarded himself as a member of a conquered and oppressed race; Home Rule for Wales was his first political object. Of course he perceived the underlying social problem and fought the landowners as his namesake fought Goliath. He raved against Salisbury, whose colonial wars brought misfortune upon the innocent Afghans and contented kraal dwellers. His indignation, if a little crude, was sincere, for the young David, failing, of course, to take into account that the atmosphere of the Zulu's kraal was not quite the same as that of Richard Lloyd's home, saw oppressed Celts all the world over and must needs try to assist them.

But he was by this time naïve only in his political views. He already had a knowledge of life, and his legal practice had shown him its darker side,

so that he could afford to smile at the wisdom exhibited in aristocratic utterances upon social questions. At the age of twenty-five he married and, in the struggle to make both ends meet, learned cunning and unscrupulousness. The Welsh people began to regard him as a fluent, zealous and capable person, and in 1890 they elected him to Parliament.

He came to London as a stranger. He represented the Welsh poor and had been elected to obtain for them greater political freedom and lighter taxation. He shared room and bed with a fellow-countryman who has recently asserted that Lloyd George's best speeches were those which he delivered to his friend at night when the conversation turned upon social inequalities and the conditions of life among the poor. His expression of face at this period was graver and sterner than before or since. He could not hope to be listened to in Parliament, where he felt himself an outsider among gentlemen, whether Conservative or Liberal. Constitutional questions did not interest him. His own Wales interested no one else. He was alone and insignificant. He had no presentiment that twenty-six years later he would be able to use Parliament as an obedient instrument and one of very little importance.

The eighteen-nineties were a relatively peaceful period. In comparative harmony the Powers divided among them what remained to be taken in Africa; that England took the lion's share seemed to be in accordance with the wise dispensation of Providence. The grouping of the Great Powers on the Continent was already beginning to take the form which was later to lead to such distressing

complications, but people troubled little about it in London, where splendid isolation was always the watchword of foreign politics. There was plenty of money; the conditions of life improved slowly but surely all round. In Parliament development proceeded in the familiar ruts of the old party lines; the Home Rule question was the centre of politics. Gladstone, under noisy opposition, failed to solve it; Salisbury and Balfour contrived with greater success to neglect it. There was no other question of great importance.

Lloyd George was ill at ease in this atmosphere. His maiden speech was not much of a success. He rose on a question of taxation, warned the Conservative government of the wrath of the free traders of Carnarvonshire—where is Carnarvonshire? wondered some of the Government—and worked off a number of amusing invectives against Joe Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill. There was some applause; a newspaper described the speech as "very clever." Gladstone complimented the speaker but forgot the name of the constituency which he represented. Two months later Lloyd George aroused attention by an unusually heated protest against the motion for a supplementary estimate for the installation of Prince Henry of Prussia as a Knight of the Garter, the funeral of the Duke of Cambridge and the new equipage of the Viceroy of Ireland; the three accounts amounted to nearly £3,500. Lloyd George, who came direct from a district where money was scarce, took grievous offence that German Princes could not receive an English Order without the poor taxpayers of Wales contributing to the cost of the festivities; in the same way he was amazed that

an official's equipage should cost £2,764. His indignation was not assumed, it was long before Lloyd George's eyes were opened to the relativity of money.

He himself had little of it. It was only thanks to his younger brother's self-sacrifice that he could live in London at all. Members of the English Parliament with a talent for writing are accustomed to gain a considerable income from newspaper articles. Lloyd George has not had the habit until recently. He has often—perhaps rather too often—changed his political views, but he has not wished to sell to the Press those which he has for the moment entertained.

There was also another reason which prevented Lloyd George from attaching himself to any of the influential party organs. He was not a good party man. He revolted openly against Gladstone, a boldness unprecedented in so young and unknown a politician. He judged political questions from Welsh standpoints, and these did not always harmonise with those of the Liberal party in England. By this means he soon became highly esteemed in Wales, but in Parliament he was regarded as a provincial who at the most might expect to become the organiser of an agitation for Welsh Home Rule. In picturesque terms he attacked everything which tended towards State control of the Church in Wales, but the great question of the day, the Irish problem, left him cold. All through the 'nineties Lloyd George was a negligible quantity in Parliament, a Radical freebooter, certainly not ungifted but without strong political views or prospects.

Lloyd George's limitations were in reality his

strength. He has never worked for anything which did not interest him; that which did not lie near his heart he shrugged his shoulders at. But whenever an idea or a question has taken hold of him he has devoted himself entirely to it and for it has forgotten everything else. These were not bad tactics.

At that time only Wales interested him. But he grew with his interests. He speaks well who only speaks of what lies near to him. Something human, something spontaneous, has always attached to Lloyd George. He has been fantastic, irresponsible, inconsistent, but he has never been dull.

It was during the Boer war that Lloyd George ceased to be Welsh and became English.

Which view of the Boer war is really the just one is a complicated question about which the learned will doubtless dispute for a long time yet. Lloyd George's standpoint has the advantage that it is consistent and uncomplicated. Of the diplomatic prelude to the war he had no very close knowledge, but he saw a little free nation, a nation like Wales, in strife with a great Power, and that was enough for him. He also had in mind that the violent and high-flown Imperialistic enthusiasm was directly inspired at least in part by financial motives not at all high-flown. Intrepidly and ruthlessly he set about his new task; in Parliament and lecture-room and on platforms in the open air he attacked the War policy with furious energy.

It was obvious from the beginning that Lloyd George did himself no good by his attitude. The war was popular; at the beginning it was, moreover, anything but a success, and this naturally rendered the critic even more unwelcome. There

were certainly plenty of Englishmen who in their heart of hearts disapproved the action against the Boers, but they mostly found it wisest to hold their peace for the present.

Nor did Lloyd George at once find the right tone. There is found in his first Boer speeches too much talk about unnecessary expense, and this became particularly irritating as army after army melted away in South Africa. With the man in the street it was easy to mistake Lloyd George's love of freedom for treachery.

But by degrees the situation changed. When the war began to take a more fortunate turn for England it was easier for Englishmen to be pro-Boer; the nerve tension relaxed. Moreover, Lloyd George's perspective widened with every speech; his moral passion increased, and tolerant Imperialists perceived that behind his love of freedom lay the same sentiment as behind Kipling's "Lest we forget." He had the luck to be in danger of his life from hot-headed Conservatives in Birmingham, and on that occasion gave proof of great personal courage, and this earned him respect even among those who most disapproved his views. Towards the end of the war he was the most unpopular man in England, but that was decidedly preferable to being unknown. He had risked much and had done so without hesitation. He could no longer be accused of vacillating opportunism.

The war had split the Liberal party into two sections: the larger and more aristocratic, headed by Asquith and Grey, attached itself to the Conservative war party, but a great number was never reconciled to the Chamberlain policy. Among the latter Lloyd George was beyond question the

leading force. When peace was concluded, peace was also made among the discordant Liberals and Lloyd George could count on a seat in the next Liberal Cabinet.

Before that time came he had contrived to strengthen his position by an able opposition to a proposal brought forward by Balfour for Educational reform in the direction of Church control and centralisation; he won the hearts of the Dissenters by some—for the matter of that entirely sincere—phrases about the difference between God's holy word and man's liturgical inventions. Then came the year 1905; the Conservative astrologers were terror-struck to discover that the blood-red Mars and the pale Saturn stood in opposition to one another in the vault of heaven, boding destruction and death. But the Liberals knew themselves to march under a lucky constellation. During the election Lloyd George generously promised universal prosperity if only the Conservatives were turned out. Things went according to calculation. In December Campbell-Bannerman was able to form a Government. Lloyd George became President of the Board of Trade. There were among Lloyd George's Liberal colleagues several who suspected that the irascible little Radical from Wales would make an odd figure as His Majesty's Minister.

Misgivings were quite unnecessary. Lloyd George forthwith assumed frock-coat and amiability. He was dignified in Office and in Parliament; he was affability itself with interviewers. It is said that, in his youth, Lloyd George's mouth had an expression of sternness which at times could approach cruelty. It disappeared now. Success has in general a softening influence upon tempera-

ment, and Lloyd George could not very well help enjoying his newly-won social position and substantial salary. The natural cheerfulness of the man, which had been half choked during the hard years of apprenticeship, revived.

As President of the Board of Trade, Lloyd George brought forward and carried through some proposals for industrial legislation which bore witness to an uncommonly great power of skilfully balancing divergent interests. He was complimented in the City and discovered—perhaps not without a certain surprise—that he got on remarkably well in the company of financial magnates.

This was not done without Wales slipping a little into the background. He preserved his social passion unabated, but contrived without difficulty to bring it into harmony with a genuine respect and sympathy for modern big business.

During these years Winston Churchill, then a very young man, was Lloyd George's most intimate friend and confederate. It was a strange alliance which was to bring about singularly momentous political consequences. The one had made his appearance in the world from poor Nonconformist Welsh artisan circles, the other belonged to England's highest aristocracy, and it seemed a far cry from the cottage of the shoemaker, Richard Lloyd, to Blenheim, the family seat of the Marlboroughs, which in size and magnificence can vie successfully with Versailles. But between Lloyd George and Churchill there were, during this year, no differences of opinion; for Lloyd George's part this friendship signified the demolishing of the old class prejudices. In Churchill's genial, audacious and impetuous character he saw something which

appealed to him more than political theory or social inheritance. Through Churchill, whose Liberalism had always been somewhat lukewarm, he was brought into contact with the younger Conservative circles. Between him and the most prominent of them, young F. E. Smith, there were, of course, great differences of opinion, but Lloyd George soon observed that the ablest men among the Conservatives understood him much better than most of his Liberal colleagues. His faith in political programmes, which had never been warm, gave way during this year to a doubt as to the importance and value of the whole of the ancient party distinctions. He was zealous for Radical Social reforms, but he had already an instinctive sympathy for firm government, for discipline and method and for the Conservative conception of the State. He quite failed, on the other hand, to understand the belief in the exclusive saving grace of the Liberal idea of government which inspired the whole political work of many of his colleagues.

In April 1908 the somewhat colourless Campbell-Bannerman tendered his resignation and later in the same month took leave also of life. Asquith succeeded automatically to his place as Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal party. The dry, cautious Asquith saw himself, without the smallest enthusiasm, compelled to give the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer to Lloyd George.

Lloyd George now believed that the great moment had come. With great care he prepared the Budget which he believed would at one blow make an end of most of the social ills which he considered it his mission to combat. He had difficulty in getting it accepted by the Cabinet; and

it was largely due to Churchill that he succeeded; a scion of the house of Marlborough could not be suspected of Socialism. On April 29th, 1909, he laid it before the House of Commons.

It is a little difficult to understand now the storm which this Budget aroused. To provide for old age pensions and health insurance he had been obliged to increase the income tax, the stamp duties, the duties on spirits, tobacco and motor-cars and, above all, the land tax, which at the same time was so graduated that it could fall only on the wealthier landowners. That the landed nobility would be anything but contented was indeed certain, but Lloyd George had surely calculated for that. He became a little bitter when their representatives in the Government christened him "The Cad of the Cabinet," but on the whole he felt unperturbed and hopeful.

In the Commons Lloyd George spoke for his Budget in his human, emotional manner. It is a War Budget, he said, which is intended to wage war on poverty and dirt. With a tenderness which was entirely genuine and deserves the name of nobility rather than sentimentality, he spoke of what his old age pensions would mean for the poor, whose life he knew better than anyone else in Parliament. The criticism of Conservatives confined itself strictly to the level of economic possibility and was to a great extent justified. It was not particularly violent. Had Lloyd George's Budget been treated in the usual way, had it been amended here and there, been accepted and met the fate of all reforms, it would not have become what its partisans hoped nor what its opponents feared.

But another fate was in store for it. The Con-

servative landed interest woke to life and raised its voice from far-off places where, otherwise, political questions are regarded as something which God and the King alone should attend to in distant London. The Budget itself occupied their minds less than Lloyd George's defence of it, which seemed to them to suggest something dark and dangerous which the politicians called Socialism and which was believed to be a sign that the day of judgment stood at the door. The latter must if possible be postponed. Extraordinary measures were found to be necessary, and so was conceived the idea of defeating the Budget in the Lords. The scheme was absurd and in direct conflict with the spirit of the English Constitution. The enlightened among the Conservatives perceived this better than any and worked as for their lives to prevent the coup; F. E. Smith—afterwards Lord Birkenhead—has related how he would sit by the hour and argue, implore and threaten to persuade the " die-hards " —as they were called—to listen to reason. His labour was in vain. The old Tory proprietors had their way all through. Lloyd George's Budget was defeated in the Lords.

The consequences of this were twofold. Lloyd George became in a moment the most popular man in England. His Budget, which on its merits was very open to attack, was canonised and, under the name of " the People's Budget," esteemed as symbol of progress and good sense. Lloyd George was not slow to take advantage of the situation. With great demagogic skill he declaimed against the obstructive Lords, depicting the inoffensive, insignificant and foolish landed proprietors as the powers of darkness combined to defeat righteousness.

The other consequence was the fall of the House of Lords. The constitutional conflicts which ended with the annulment of the Upper House's right of absolute veto filled England for several years with the din and clash of arms, but Lloyd George took no great account of that. He has never felt any great interest in purely constitutional questions. He came during the years after 1911 to stand a little in the shade, for the Budget was in the end completely forgotten in the results which it produced for the Upper House.

But in 1911 an episode occurred in which Lloyd George appeared in what for him was a quite new rôle. It was during the days of the Agadir crisis, and the political sky was overcast. Lloyd George, after conferring with Grey, made a speech in which, in plain terms, he laid down that the position of the British Empire in the world was for him the weightiest of all questions, and that it would be best for the peace of the world that all foreign Powers should take note that on this point all Englishmen were united. The intention was unmistakable. Lloyd George had visited Germany in 1908, had enjoyed the hospitality of the Imperial Chancellor and had admired the Prussian organisation. He was regarded by the Germans as the most pro-German element in the British Government. His words during the Agadir crisis occasioned much agitation in Berlin and induced a proportionate degree of caution. In France it was understood as a guarantee of the validity of the Entente; Lloyd George's speech led directly to the fall of the pro-German Caillaux.

But that was an episode which only in the light of later events obtained its true significance. In

other respects the years immediately preceding the World War were full of disappointments for Lloyd George. The friendship with Churchill cooled when the latter became First Lord of the Admiralty and, as such, lost interest in everything except the improvement of the navy. As Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George was not very happy over the incessant demands for votes for new Dreadnoughts. 1913 let him in for an unpleasant adventure; he had bought shares in the American Marconi Company, and it was insinuated that his investment was determined by his foreknowledge of a contract signed not long after between the British Government and the Marconi Company. The matter came before Parliament and Lloyd George was publicly exonerated, but the scandal had troubled him. His hair became white during these years.

When 1914 arrived, Lloyd George was in many respects a disappointed man. He was fully fifty and he had, humanly speaking, not much to hope from the future. It might indeed be thought that he had had a fine career; it was not bad for a little poor boy from Wales to become England's Chancellor of the Exchequer. But he could not conceal from himself that he had been happier as a little poor boy. He felt harassed and homeless. He was sick of the monotonous routine of his office. He was sick of Parliamentary debates. He was sick of pretending an interest in political fictions. He longed for reality, for action and risks.

Lloyd George, who during the Boer war was called a pacifist, might well have been inclined to regret that he belonged to an age in which war had been abolished. He was capable of every kind of exertion except the quiet, steady fulfilling of every-

day duty. He had power to remove mountains, but not regularly to carry pebbles. He had gained many friends; smiling, clever, amiable and rich in fancy as he was, he was hard to resist; but he had more difficulty in keeping his friends, and he himself soon tired of them. He could display really great eloquence and, when he became inspired, found unsought the great style, but he had less talent for the exposition of facts. He had a singular capacity for understanding mankind, for guessing their secret thoughts, for seeing through their intention, but of what use was that to him in Parliament, where the voting went according to the fixed lines of party system? He was in touch with spontaneous and primitive humanity and with all the irrational factors which create and stir up popular movements, but he was out of touch with the spirit of the Liberal and Conservative party conclaves. He enjoyed the game of Parliamentary intrigue, but no longer knew what to intrigue for. His reforms, so concrete, so human in conception, were reduced to thin air by the time they had undergone all the necessary amendment. He was always becoming superfluous. He was an explosive substance, and gunpowder is not an indispensable article in time of peace. In full sunshine and with moderate and favourable winds the British ship of State sailed in the traditional direction. A pilot able to sail his ship in full hurricane among whirlpools, rocks and shoals scarcely found at such a time full employment aboard.

There were people who believed that Lloyd George was under the special protection of Satan. This opinion would seem more plausible if they had justified it on the ground that, in the summer of

1914, the potentate in question had thrust people into hell for the benefit of his protégé.

On the evening of the 4th August, 1914, most of the English Ministers sat in the Cabinet room in Downing Street and waited for Big Ben to strike eleven, the hour at which the time stipulated in England's ultimatum to Germany would expire. They sat silent, each sunk in his thoughts. The first stroke sounded. "When," related Lloyd George afterwards, "the clock's heavy stroke boomed from the clapper, it seemed that we had passed over the borders into a new world."

The plural pronoun is really misleading. In the English Cabinet Lloyd George was the only one for whom at that moment all perspectives were altered and all old things changed into new. There were in the Cabinet some who—it may be with various feelings—had, for the past year, been reckoning with the probability of what now had come to pass; such were Asquith, Grey, Haldane and Churchill. Among those who had not been concerned with the dangerous game of Foreign Politics were some who, in revolt and despair over the declaration of war, left the Cabinet; these were Morley and John Burns. There were others who yielded to the War Party but who never could wholly reconcile themselves with the war against Germany; among them were Harcourt and Sir John Simon. Lloyd George's position was different from all these. He thought and felt in the same way as the crowds which at that moment, outside in Whitehall, sang "God Save the King."

Two days earlier Lloyd George had been a pacifist. He had gone much further than the peace-loving Grey, and when the Conservative

leaders on the 2nd of August informed the Government that it could count on the Conservative party's loyal support in the event of a conflict, Lloyd George had still rejected every thought of war. He had no knowledge of the treaty with France; for the rest he was rather predisposed to sympathise with Germany than with France. In a few hours he was converted. Of course the violation of Belgium's neutrality did much; Lloyd George could truthfully declare that his present position was consistent with his attitude during the Boer war. But what had most to do with it was a purely irrational, undefinable and thus obvious factor: the sudden bursting-into-flame of the war feeling of the English people. Lloyd George had not called it forth, he did not ponder over it, he was seized by it. He gave himself up to it, entirely and unreflectingly and more intensely than anyone else: he had forgotten all that he had previously thought, hoped and said. From this time forward he desired and knew one thing only, and that was victory.

Lloyd George knew nothing about war. For that reason perhaps he understood it better than anyone else. Those who had prepared for it or, disillusioned, had calculated upon it, could not be gripped by it in the same way. Lloyd George was caught by the war just as the young men who offered themselves as volunteers, and he reacted in the same way. His war trumpet was only the interpreter of the English people.

Popular will in a war has little in common with the diplomatic prelude; it is directed by ideas and not by realities. When the neutral observers urged the belligerents to fight calmly like gentlemen and

above all not to confuse their greed of gain with ideas of right and wrong they were more well-meaning than intelligent. Whatever may be the reason for an outbreak of war, the common people do not leave workshop, wife and children and go to their death with the conscious intention of increasing dividends for the shareholders in an ammunition factory or of relieving a Minister from the necessity of resigning. It showed a very great simplicity when people in the neutral countries summoned the belligerents to take things quietly and treat it all like a bridge party with heavy stakes. In order to become a good soldier an ordinary citizen must believe that the cause he fights for is that of justice, and that is as well, for otherwise one would be obliged to think very ill of human nature.

When the war broke out Lloyd George had fought out many a bout in the ring of English Home Politics, and his hands, though not girlishly white, were free from blood. The enthusiasm which inspired the first crowds of English volunteers did not last long; it was succeeded first by hatred, later by weariness, and those whom it sustained soon lay fallen in Flanders and by the Dardanelles. Ere this it had had time to take the form of imperishable art in Rupert Brooke's poems; in the sonnet which began with the great line: "Blow out, you bugles, over the rich dead!" it has been interpreted thus:

"Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a King, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again,
And we have come into our heritage."

Alone among statesmen Lloyd George was inspired by the same passion. That to which Rupert Brooke gave poetical form Lloyd George interpreted in prose in the best of his war speeches. That in the Queen's Hall on 19th September, 1914. One cannot be mistaken about the tone of these words: "It is a great opportunity, an opportunity that only comes once in many centuries to the children of men. For most generations sacrifice comes in drab and weariness of spirit. It comes to you to-day, and it comes to-day to us all, in the form of the glow and thrill of a great movement for liberty. . . . May I tell you in a simple parable what I think this war is for us? I know a valley in North Wales between the mountains and the sea. It is a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blasts. But it is very enervating, and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hill above the village to have a glimpse of the great mountains in the distance and to be stimulated and freshened by the breezes which came from the hill-tops, and by the spectacle of their grandeur. We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable and too indulgent, many, perhaps, too selfish, and the stern hand of fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the everlasting things that matter for a nation—the great peaks we had forgotten, of Honour, of Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the towering pinnacle of Sacrifice pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven. We shall descend into the valleys again; but as long as men and women of this generation last, they will carry in their hearts the image of those mighty peaks whose foundations

are not shaken though Europe rock and sway in the convulsions of a great war."

It is in the first place extraordinarily finely said; it is in the second place extraordinarily nobly thought. One has in these words the whole Lloyd George at his best when, in the transport of the moment, he forgets to cast watchful glances sideways. It may, of course, be said that it is a trifle compromising for a former pacifist to give utterance to so obvious an antipathy for peace and quietness, but in the existing situation Lloyd George's warlike mentality was the only appropriate one. This was not obvious during the first days of the war, when it was thought that victory was near, but it was soon to appear that Lloyd George's enthusiasm was more realistic than the measured, matter-of-fact attitude of others.

In the autumn of 1914, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George had to take care that the disturbance of the world should not produce chaos in the City. He did so with firmness and prudence, and established very good relations with the magnates of the Stock Exchange. But this task could not long satisfy Lloyd George's violent longing for activity; the City was too calm for the new war demon. Lloyd George threw himself into the War Department, and already by the close of 1914 had seen clearly that both the English Government and the English direction of the war ought as soon as possible to be got rid of.

Later developments showed that he was right. It was only the English Fleet which was equal to the situation; the English army was ill equipped and ill led. The generals were veterans from the colonial wars who felt themselves somewhat lost

before the task of fighting against the finest army the world had hitherto seen; moreover, they failed to collaborate with the French army command. Asquith had left all initiative to Kitchener, whom an admiring and uncritical people regarded as the infallible authority. Between Lloyd George and Kitchener an embittered strife was waged during the first years of war which was fraught with consequences at least as momentous as any of the great battles at the front. Kitchener took office as an expert in all that bears the name of War and he had had abundant experience. Englishmen have always looked upon the man of experience as infallible, and to oppose Kitchener was, at the beginning of the war, a great feat. It was only Lloyd George who dared openly to laugh at Kitchener's experience. When a problem was debated Kitchener met all objections with the phrase: "I learned that in my campaign of so and so." Lloyd George replied that these experiences were unimportant; that fighting against the Germans was not the same thing as fighting against Arabs or negroes. Experience, that is always from yesterday, but we are living in to-day, and that means that we live in a new world. The key of experience no longer fits when all locks are new, and that which is happening to-day only David Lloyd George understood, not in virtue of knowledge or experience or military studies, but in virtue of infallible intuition and common-sense. Only he who knows nothing of the conduct of war can carry on this war. Kitchener, accustomed to submission and silent subordination, regarded the flashy and gesticulating politician as an evil spirit.

Such was Lloyd George's standpoint. There are

too many contradictory accounts of Kitchener's position in the Cabinet for it to be possible to decide definitely in what measure Lloyd George's intolerance was justified. Towards 1915 he had a special problem to deal with. The English production of munitions failed to keep pace with the consumption at the front; intelligence came, moreover, from Russia that they would shortly be without heavy ammunition. The Entente was actually threatened with a catastrophe. Kitchener turned a deaf ear to Lloyd George's frantic demands for the complete reorganisation of the production of munitions; his admirers have since sought to defend him by insinuating that he did not wish to admit the existence of any danger lest the Germans should believe the moment to be at hand for a decisive offensive. The defence seems inadequate. The general public in the meanwhile became uneasy; the spring of 1915 was an unfortunate time for the Entente. Asquith reconstructed his Cabinet and Lloyd George became Minister of Munitions.

Lloyd George believed that he—and he only—could save England; during the time that he held office as Minister of Munitions the general public began to share his opinion. His unscrupulousness in questions of means, his sublime indifference to cost, his deafness to cautious argument now became merits, for it was necessary to act quickly. How he sometimes managed it may be illustrated by a typical anecdote. It was a question of breaking a trade trust, of inducing the industries to look far beyond all agreements and considerations of their own profit, it was a question of creating self-sacrificing patriots out of the cool and confident leaders of English big business, it was a question of

achieving the impossible. At one meeting with leading financiers Lloyd George had perceived that argument and practical reason and discussions and figures served for nothing; industry would rather see England lose the war than lose its chances of profit against the Crown. Lloyd George lay back in his chair, his face grew pale, his eyes filled with tears, his very voice and the papers in his hand trembled like an aspen. "Gentlemen," he said, "have you forgotten that at this moment your sons are being killed, killed in hundreds and thousands? They are being killed by German guns because we have no guns. Your sons, your brothers, young boys who have not reached the dawn of manhood, are being swept out of life in thousands. Gentlemen, give me the guns! Do not think of your trade agreements, think of your children! Help me! Give me those guns!" The miracle came to pass; the apathetic men of affairs became human for a moment, and what no argument had accomplished Lloyd George won by a gesture. Pliable, imaginative, altogether human, he could at one moment appeal to the heart and his fine grey eyes be wet with emotion; at the next moment he could fight with iron hand against opposition and strikes, if he preferred that method. It was not very easy to determine where one really had him; the English knew themselves out of touch with the wonderful Celt, but they followed him, one after the other, irrespective of political views and bitter memories of bygone feuds. Already during 1915 they were beginning in Conservative circles to intrigue for getting rid of Asquith and Kitchener, for introducing compulsory service after the continental pattern and making Lloyd George all-powerful.

During 1916 the first signs of war weariness began to show themselves in England. The situation in Germany was still darker, but people were not aware of that. Organised co-operation was all the time lacking between the Allies. The fate of Serbia and Rumania cried aloud of what this defect signified. Churchill was out of the Cabinet; Kitchener vanished that summer in the North Sea and Lloyd George succeeded him as War Secretary. Asquith grew more and more apathetic; his son had been killed and he was a broken man. Lloyd George alone represented the unbroken will to victory; his optimism was associated with a complete condemnation of the Government and the General Staff. When, after what Asquith afterwards called "a well-planned and skilfully led conspiracy," he became, in December 1916, Prime Minister, he was convinced that dictatorship was the only possible way to the goal.

Had Lloyd George been an Englishman, he would not have been able with the same freedom of judgment to disregard all the forms which had become traditional in the English system of government. As a Welshman he had never had any respect for English traditions, and, when he now became Prime Minister, he to all intents abolished the Parliament, the Parties and the Constitution. He gave some of the most important departments in the Government to the Tory leaders and those Liberals in whom he had confidence; in fact he chose his Ministers entirely at his discretion. The task of being the Government's spokesman in the Commons he gave to Bonar Law; he himself visited the House only on special occasions. Side by side with the Government he established his first War

Cabinet which had absolute control of the conduct of the war. This consisted of the Socialist Henderson, who served in an ornamental capacity as representing Labour, and was, moreover, soon got rid of when he thought fit kindly to accept an invitation to a Socialist peace conference at Stockholm; of Lord Curzon and Lord Milner and of Lloyd George himself. Both Curzon and Milner had in the past been Lloyd George's deadly enemies and represented the feudal aspirations of the Tories, but Lloyd George no longer considered anything but the war. In the Defence Committee he was all-powerful; Curzon and Milner were only employed in giving directions on matters of form.

The poetic Welshman revealed himself as a veritable autocrat. He no longer retained the idealistic enthusiasm of the early days of the war; the naked and adamantine will to victory remained. The home front in England wavered; the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne, spoke openly of concessions and peace by negotiation. Lloyd George, humanitarian and pacifist, stood unmoved. He was truly great during these years. His colleagues have since related how he alone in the Cabinet never for a moment lost self-possession. When the U-boat war seemed most threatening, the rest of the Ministers were ready to despair; Lloyd George cut short every discussion with the phrase: "So long as there is a British vessel afloat, I do not haul down the flag."

Another time insurrection threatened simultaneously in India, Egypt and Ireland; Lloyd George gave his Ministers the necessary orders and closed the meeting with the observation: "So yet

once more this old Empire is to fight for its very life." The dead-tired Ministers gave up arguing; they obeyed blindly. Ludendorff, in his *Kriegserinnerungen*, has pointed out that it was Lloyd George's iron dictatorship which held the home front unbroken in England.

Lloyd George could not at the same moment that he became Prime Minister dismiss the Chief of the General Staff, Sir William Robertson, but he could at once show him that he had found his master. It was by Lloyd George's direct order and contrary to the intentions of the General Staff that Italy was saved by French and English troops. It was Lloyd George who saw to it that the war in the East was carried on with energy. It was Lloyd George who, without asking anyone's advice, gave orders that the English merchant fleet should be placed at America's disposal for the transport of troops. After the defeat on the Western front in the spring of 1918 he carried through the placing of the combined forces under a single command; before that time he had compelled Robertson to resign. When finally the control of the English army stood under the command of Foch, Lloyd George's task was finished. He could wait for the end.

In judging Lloyd George one must reckon with the fact that at the end of the war he was a tired man. He had fought it out and he had won. He had only lived for victory. When the Armistice was signed his only feeling was one of emptiness.

The only rational thing to be said now was Candide's "*Il faut cultiver notre jardin.*" Unfortunately that was also the one thing that Lloyd George could not say. For him it was easier to promise the speedy coming of the millennium, and that is what

he did in his khaki election speeches. It was a rash promise, and the vain attempts to redeem it occasioned his fall.

The war had rendered Lloyd George calm and unyielding; the peace rendered him irresolute and nervous. In the hour of danger he had not hesitated for a second; when the danger was over he lost his bearings. He had a dim sense that the German danger was succeeded by the far more serious Russian one. Lord Milner persuaded him to prevent the settlement of the Rhine boundary; by this means he caused the speedy end of the Franco-English friendship. When he signed the peace of Versailles he was dissatisfied, irritated and dead-tired, only glad to be done with it all.

The tolling of the bell had already begun. Lloyd George was, without question, still the most prominent man in England, but upon important questions the initiative began to slip into the hands of his Ministers. He solved the Irish question, but the credit was just as much Birkenhead's. Foreign policy began more and more to be directed by Curzon and Churchill. The Coalition by which Lloyd George was supported grew still more illusory. What he now retained was really only his personal charm; he held his Ministers imprisoned in its magic circle and he scintillated at international congresses, but he was no longer the dictator. "Verily," it is said in *Vita Nuova*, "I had set my foot upon a territory which no man may cross by so much as a single step if he would return alive." Lloyd George's Beatrice was called Bellona. For her sake he had, as he said himself, crossed the boundaries into a new world; he could not now find his way back to the old. To be sure

he could always engineer revolutions, reforms, intrigues, he could plan extensive enterprises and give imposing and plausible promises, but Englishmen had had enough of all that. They wanted now only one thing, a little bit of peace. And that Lloyd George could not give. So he fell.

Those who were faithful to Lloyd George to the end settled down after a while under the mild sceptre of Baldwin. It might seem as if Lloyd George had not left much behind him. And yet the party which to-day follows Baldwin is after all neither the old Tory party nor the old Liberal party, it is a party created by Lloyd George. It is a matter of indifference whether one believes that Lloyd George killed Liberalism or whether one believes that he turned the Conservatives into Liberals. The fact remains that he burst the barriers between the constitutional parties; that which remains of them is only a rudiment. This is an exploit which, whatever one may otherwise think of Lloyd George, demands a place for him among the great. It was the aim of several of the leading statesmen of the nineteenth century; none attained it before Lloyd George.

The picture I have sought to give of Lloyd George may perhaps explain why he succeeded in that which appeared impossible for others. His unprincipled and thoroughly emotional nature made him more independent than anyone else of antiquated political traditions. The division of the constitutional parties was a memory from a time when there was no political class organisation; in the era of Socialism it is without meaning and a disastrous madness. A German historian has described Lloyd George as the greatest contemporary

realist; if the expression be justified it is because it was he who first of all discerned that the difference between Unionist and Liberal is a fiction. People are wont to criticise Lloyd George on the ground that he has forgotten what he has said;—to forget an old grudge may sometimes be meritorious. His strange career, to all appearances so determined by outside accidents, has, for all its twists and curves, been consistent in one respect; he has sought the goal without consideration of the means. A tradition-bound Englishman would never have been able to mould Liberals and Conservatives into one anti-Socialist party. Lloyd George flared up and vanished like a comet in the vault of heaven, but now that he has disappeared one can see that the constellations are no longer the same.

IV

STANLEY BALDWIN

HONESTY is scarcely the quality which modern statesmen are wont to prize most highly. Old Lord Morley was called by his friends "honest John"; the noble lord was not very well pleased with the nickname, behind which he suspected a sort of criticism; he would doubtless have preferred to be complimented upon his astuteness and knowledge of the world. Lloyd George once declared that Bonar Law was "honest even to the point of folly"; it probably did not distress him that it would not occur to anyone to say anything like that about himself. Bonar Law's friend and successor in the leadership of the English Conservatives, Stanley Baldwin, however, took hold of the expression and employed it in a manner which scarcely suited with Lloyd George's intentions. At the election, so disastrous for the Conservatives, of the autumn of 1923, Baldwin quoted Lloyd George's phrase in one of his speeches and added: "If these six words can be said of me when the General Election takes place I shall feel proud as an individual and entirely confident of the success of my party." Baldwin's rejoinder was taken not only as a tribute to the memory of the recently deceased Bonar Law; it was also intended to indicate his own attitude. Both Baldwin and his hearers were aware that the new

leader of the English Conservatives had been chosen on the ground that "he was trustworthy, and too stupid to intrigue." And nothing else really was known about him. He had never made much of a stir in Parliament. He had allied himself with the insignificant Bonar Law, and on that ground had been appointed President of the Board of Trade in Lloyd George's last Coalition Government of 1921. In this capacity he cannot be said to have won any laurels. He sat for the most part silent at the meetings of the Cabinet, and was regarded by his colleagues as a negligible quantity, a reputation which he preserved up to October 1922. Little more than six months later Baldwin was Prime Minister of England. It is, when you come to think of it, one of the queerest happenings in England's queer political history.

Baldwin's advancement should, of course, in the first place be considered as a reaction against the rule of Lloyd George. For six years, 1916–1922, the Welsh Wizard had controlled England almost absolutely. Backed by a coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberals, he seemed independent of Parliament. His opponents, few in number and powerless, were a few Asquithian Liberals and Socialists. He had gathered on his side all the greatest talents in English political life, and justly regarded himself as able to count upon their loyalty. There was certainly a party among the Unionists with whom he knew himself to be unpopular, but, as its leaders were for the most part peers of more obstinacy than intelligence, Lloyd George considered that he was justified in forgetting its existence, and in the meanwhile he was quite content to devote all his time to the control of world policy.

The opposition to Lloyd George never found much utterance in the Press; it was part of his policy to keep on good terms with the more prominent journalists. But after he came back from Versailles it grew all the stronger for being suppressed. During the war, in the hour of danger and need, the English Conservatives had been willing to forget everything about Lloyd George except that he was the genius of victory, but, after the conclusion of peace, misgivings began to awake. It was hard for a noble landowner to accept the leadership of the man who had shattered the power of the landowners.

Business men had grown tired of Lloyd George's eloquence and brilliant schemes; they began to long for economy and for dry and trustworthy figures. They had had enough of enthusiasm, intuition, cleverness and genius; they began to long for practical knowledge and ordinary straightforward solvency. They had had enough of suppleness and dexterity; they began to long for constancy and trustworthiness. They had had enough of adventure; they wanted to return to business as usual. And above all they wanted to become Conservative again, and they felt themselves without right to that title so long as they had for leader the unprincipled Lloyd George.

It was at the famous meeting at the Carlton Club in October 1922 that the storm burst. England's ablest and most brilliant men ranged themselves unhesitatingly on the side of Lloyd George. Lord Curzon, Lord Balfour, Lord Birkenhead, Austen Chamberlain, Winston Churchill and Sir Robert Horne did their utmost to save the Coalition; their chief argument was that the old opposition between Conservatives and Liberals was immaterial in com-

parison with the opposition which characterises modern politics, between the constitutional parties and the Socialists. The irreconcilable opponents of the Coalition found their spokesman in Stanley Baldwin. It was thanks to his energy, his zeal and his arguments that the majority of the meeting determined to upset the Coalition. The result was the fall of Lloyd George.

Baldwin had succeeded in winning Bonar Law to his side; that this was so was due to the fact that the latter was broken down by ill-health. In Bonar Law's Ministry of 1922 Baldwin was bound to be the leading man; the Ministry was his work. He had succeeded in reconciling himself with Curzon, but Lloyd George's remaining adherents were inflexible, and the violent rage of the Conservative intellectuals over Baldwin's coup found utterance in Birkenhead's activity as an author. It might undeniably be said with a certain justice that the consequence of the Carlton meeting was the disappearance of the intellectuals from the Conservative party, the annihilation of the talented and the triumph of the mediocrities.

Baldwin's first steps on the path of statesmanship were scarcely calculated to increase confidence in him. The debt settlement with the United States was entirely his work and, as we know, it is as disadvantageous for England as can readily be imagined. To be willing to pay even to the last farthing is certainly praiseworthy, but it is expected of a statesman that he should have an eye to his country's advantage and not only to its morals. In May 1923 Bonar Law died and Baldwin became Prime Minister. In order to carry through his protectionist policy and to gain a wider parliamentary

following he decided to dissolve Parliament. The defeat was overwhelming, and Birkenhead was able to proclaim that the result of the Carlton meeting had been England's first Socialist Government.

In any other country than England Baldwin would now have become impossible for all time. But the English have their own way of doing things, and one of their peculiarities is their unwillingness to desert a leader in adversity. In the hour of misfortune and humiliation Baldwin could not only count on the absolute loyalty of his adherents, but saw also a possibility of a reconciliation with the Coalition Unionists. When the election of 1924—by reason of circumstances which Baldwin could hardly foresee, still less occasion—ended in a brilliant victory for the Conservatives, Birkenhead, Chamberlain and Churchill took office in Baldwin's Government.

Baldwin's Government, from certain points of view one of the strongest which England has had for a long time, has had great difficulties to contend with; England has passed through crises which were scarcely less disastrous than the most critical phases of the World War. Baldwin can by no means be said to be at the present moment in the position of a triumphant conqueror; he still watches from Downing Street with justifiable disquiet the clouds which gather thick and dark on the horizon. But he has gained the confidence of the country. He is popular. He is admired, he is looked up to as the prototype of the most genuinely English virtues. If he has not secured the position of the Conservative party, he has in any case secured his own position as the Conservative party's leader. One cannot help wondering what actually are the qualities in

Stanley Baldwin which have obtained for him this position. He is no genius, and he has not been lucky in most of his undertakings. He is a simple man; there is nothing brilliant or striking in his personality. He is no orator, he is no thinker, he is not even a skilful tactician. In every way a self-made man, without influential relations, he has gained a position of power which far surpasses that of every contemporary private gentleman, and that too without its being possible to say that he has striven for it. As long as he could, he remained in the background; he is as far as possible from the type of the political climber.

Whoever has collected material for a biography of Stanley Baldwin should be able to count on a large circle of readers of his book. Knowledge of the subject is scanty and curiosity is great. Adam Gowans Whyte has now published the first life of Baldwin, a small and easily read volume of less than 200 pages. The work is by no means a masterpiece; it is monotonously panegyrical, and the author's psychological and political reflections are of the most artless kind. But it supplies some interesting information on matters of fact and, above all, a string of illuminating extracts from Baldwin's speeches and political articles. That is enough to make it worth reading. Both on his father's and mother's side Baldwin is descended from zealous sectaries; in himself one can find traces both of the Quaker and the Methodist. Rudyard Kipling is his cousin. The great writer's less ardent admirers are wont to speak, not without a certain tinge of contempt, of the Kiplingesque non-commissioned officer's ideal. This includes, however, some qualities which perhaps are not quite without value; the fear of God,

industry and courage; it is a heritage from the days of Cromwell and is to be met with almost everywhere on the higher levels of English civilisation if one digs a little beneath the surface. Rudyard Kipling's cousin has, in any case, a distinct resemblance to the English non-commissioned officer in the well-known ballad "Pharaoh and the Sergeant."

In Stanley Baldwin, however, his puritanic heritage does not preclude participation in the gayer and more sociable sides of the English tradition. He is an open-air man who never feels himself really at his ease anywhere but in the country. There are not many parts of England that he has not explored, and his best friends are simple farmers. In questions of horticulture and pig-breeding he is an incomparable expert; his whole temperament reminds one of a jolly farmer, and one may venture to conjecture that Cobbett is one of his favourite authors. He has sometimes said that anyone familiar with the English countryside knows that Dickens has not exaggerated; he is also in the habit of saying that Dickens and Lamb are the most English of all authors. There is a fund of quiet humour in Baldwin which complements in a refreshing manner the more serious sides of his character.

Baldwin is moral and jovial; his third characteristic is that he is a man of business. His father was a successful ironmaster; the son inherited both the business and the capacity for its management. Stanley Baldwin was efficient as a leader of industry and a banker before he gave a serious thought to politics. He knew how to manage a business before he began to consider how to manage a kingdom. He had seen in practice how good relations may be established between workmen and employers before

he gave advice concerning the most suitable methods for settling strikes.

In 1908 Baldwin succeeded his father in Parliament. He aroused no great attention; he listened more than he talked. He only spoke occasionally, and then always on questions which he thoroughly understood. But he had nothing more to offer than knowledge of his subject, and it is well known that this is not very highly esteemed among politicians. A witticism from Lloyd George was enough to cause Baldwin's knowledge of facts to be forgotten.

In June 1919 Baldwin wrote in *The Times* an anonymous article in which he expressed his opinion that what ought first to be attended to was the payment of war debts. So long as the war lasted, Lloyd George had done right in not considering the cost, but now the day of reckoning was at hand. "It is so easy to live upon borrowed money; it is difficult to realise that the money is not yours. It is so easy to play, so hard to learn that you cannot play without working. The fools' paradise is only the ante-chamber of the fools' hell." He ended by suggesting the immediate liquidation of foreign debts however heavily the necessary sacrifices must be felt.

It is important to understand this point of view of Baldwin's if one is to do justice to his settlement with the United States. He did not travel to America with the intention of performing a political master-stroke and leading the American citizen by the nose; he went there with the intention of paying. He knew that England's debtors on the Continent had no thought of meeting their current obligation and that England would come to be overwhelmed

by a heavier burden of taxation than would fall upon any other State, but he considered that any sacrifices would be worth making for the sake of adhesion to sound business principles and deliverance from all the disease germs of inflation.

In Parliament Baldwin at the outset found understanding only in Bonar Law, a capable and honest man of business who was placed by chance in a political storm centre where he lacked all qualifications to hold his ground. Baldwin gave Bonar Law his undivided confidence; undivided suspicion was, on the other hand, all he had left for Lloyd George. He was indifferent to the fascination of Lloyd George's ingenious personality; he saw only his brilliant irresponsibility and his complete unscrupulousness in the matter of expedients. He saw a transcendently gifted demagogue who was more concerned about appearances than about facts, who sought rather to talk over than to convince. He saw how Lloyd George, for the attainment of his purpose, availed himself of any instrument which was handy, how he laughingly made peers of the most questionable jobbers and only replied to remonstrances with a shrug of the shoulders, "I need the man." He saw how Parliament became more and more morally tainted, how politicians sold their services right and left. And he saw how the finest men in the country were so bewitched by Lloyd George that they had rather shut their eyes than abandon a state of things which they knew to be in many respects unhealthy. In his speech at the Carlton Club Baldwin declared that Lloyd George was a dynamic force which would blow English Conservatism into the air, and that tranquillity and order would never prevail in the political life of

England so long as this "terrible personality" retained his autocratic position.

It need not be pointed out that much of Baldwin's criticism of Lloyd George was unfair, but it can just as little be denied that much was justified. The gifted climber, the brilliant and irresponsible professional politician had, under the sway of Lloyd George, extraordinarily greater chances to come to the front. Everyone knew that political life had no attraction for Baldwin, that he accepted the leadership as a duty and not from inclination. At first it aroused wonder, because people were not used to such things, but it soon aroused confidence as well.

Baldwin's greatest political success has been the manner in which in the spring of 1926 he handled the great strike; certainly during those days he displayed a combination of calm and firmness which it is impossible to praise too highly, and which has seldom been equalled. But what has made him popular is not his successes, which have been few, but his character. It cannot be disputed that the atmosphere of Downing Street has become purer since he took up his abode there. There is an end to the influence of Press magnates and financial bigwigs. Conditions in England are anything but ideal, but there is confidence in the pilot of the ship of State; he does not know every rock under the water and at times he nearly runs aground, but he keeps the right course. With this silent, unpretentious man, democratic in the true sense of the word, the old English virtues have again come into honour; John Bull has a feeling that he is once more master in his own house. People are glad that the ingenious Celt is succeeded by an ordinary Englishman. That is the reason of Baldwin's popularity.

There is one figure in the history of England whom Baldwin strikingly resembles, Lord George Bentinck, the quiet landowner and judge of horse-flesh, not greatly interested in politics, who, when the leaders of the Conservative party, with Peel at their head, began in the eighteen forties to experiment with free trade policy, suddenly stepped forward and made himself the spokesman of the agricultural party's tongue-tied representatives. Bentinck also saw the most talented men among the Conservatives leaving the party, but, like Baldwin, he considered that trustworthiness and loyalty are, in the long run, of greater importance than oratorical ability and tactical experience. Bentinck died before his work was completed, but it remains clear to posterity that it was thanks to his pioneer work that Disraeli was able to create the great and homogeneous Tory party which, at the end of the century, dominated English politics.

It may be that Baldwin has done his country a similar service. The many difficulties with which he has had to contend and the many mistakes of which, without the slightest doubt, he has been guilty have produced on the Continent the impression that the sun of the British Empire is declining. All over the world they are already, in the Press, beginning to ring vespers. It is open to question whether the many bells are not a little premature. In a speech on the future of the Empire Baldwin lays down that the world's dominions from Rome to England have had their peculiar strength in the character of the people, in their moral characteristics rather than in the multitude of their accumulated riches. No one who shares Baldwin's opinion is disposed to believe that England has played out its part in history be-

cause it has become less rich than it used to be. The Empire's greatness is not bought with gold, its founders were not men of special genius, but they had patience and faith, tenacity and vigour. The quiet Baldwin possesses these qualities; looking back on his life and his actions one comes to think of two lines from an English poem:

"But we are the people of England; and we have not spoken yet.
Smile at us, pay us, pass us. But do not quite forget."

V

LORD BIRKENHEAD

IN the autumn of 1923 Lord Birkenhead, the newly-appointed Secretary for India, addressed the students of Glasgow University on "Idealism in International Politics." He displayed there that disillusioned conception of human nature which in general characterises Conservative politicians, and warned his hearers against the belief that the kingdom of peace is immediately at hand. It was nothing either new or provocative. The address, however, contained some words which made an incredible sensation. They were as follows :—"The world is continually offering splendid prizes to those who have bold hearts and sharp swords."

The tone is undoubtedly a little provocative. It indicates delight rather than disapproval. The many Radical idealists who had for long dedicated to Lord Birkenhead their sincerest hatred took occasion to point out that these words were the self-revelation of the cynical soldier of fortune. With them the climber, egotistical and devoid of ideas, had branded himself. Birkenhead was rather astonished at the attention he had aroused; he thought he had only stated a quite self-evident fact.

And Lord Birkenhead is beyond doubt a soldier of fortune. Even among politicians there are some who do not belong to that category. One cannot imagine, for instance, the phrase quoted above in

Stanley Baldwin's mouth. But one may certainly say that in general the adventurer—even the unsuccessful adventurer—is not a particularly rare phenomenon. Worldly success indeed seldom comes as an agreeable surprise upon which a man has never calculated; it comes commonly only to him who from the beginning has strenuously striven for it. The singularity in the case of Lord Birkenhead is partly the success with which he has practised the adventurer's profession, partly the circumstance that, during his wooing of Dame Fortune, he has never represented himself as striving only for the crown of thorns. He has never made any secret of the fact that it is thanks to his strength and not thanks to his virtues that he has won his brilliant victories in the struggle of life. Camouflage may, however, be expedient, and not least in England; certainly Lord Birkenhead's frank self-declaration has injured rather than benefited him. That he has, in spite of everything, thrust himself forward into the foremost opening in the ranks of mankind is due only to the extraordinary qualities of his brain and muscle.

Lord Birkenhead is not a great man in the true significance of the word. He is not winning like Baldwin, not fascinating like Lloyd George, nor impressive like Churchill. He has never been inspired by a great idea nor carried away by a strong passion. Adventurers seldom make any great contribution to history; that is a stroke of justice in the ordering of the world. But Birkenhead may without exaggeration be called interesting. His physical and intellectual gifts are phenomenal. He belongs to a type of mankind which is not to be met with in our country and of the existence of which it will do us no harm to have some knowledge. For, however

Birkenhead may be judged by posterity, one cannot get away from the fact that it is his spiritual kindred of various nationalities who inherit the earth.

The first considerable book about Lord Birkenhead appeared in the late autumn of 1926. The author conceals himself modestly under the pseudonym "Ephesian"; he is, however, obviously one of Lord Birkenhead's more devout admirers, and one ought to read his presentment critically. But, if one looks beyond the many rose bouquets and the unnecessarily detailed accounts of Lord Birkenhead's favourite dishes, pet dogs and charming young daughters, the book may be read with interest. It contains in any case the material from which it is possible to construct a character of Lord Birkenhead.

Lord Birkenhead is a self-made man. His father, Frederick Smith, was the son of a strict Methodist who, when he discovered one day that the boy had been skating on Sunday, turned him out of the house without ceremony. "For you have no place in a Christian home."

Frederick Smith, then seventeen years old, was, however, himself also of hard stuff; he enlisted and, during his time of service in India, contrived by means of incredible economy to save a small sum of money which put him in a position to devote himself to the study of the law. He became a competent advocate, but died early and left a wife and children in poor circumstances.

The eldest son, Frederick Edwin Smith, was then seventeen years of age; he was born in 1872. He was a big strong boy of prepossessing appearance, successful in the schoolroom and even more so in the playing fields. He had already seen a good deal of the world and enjoyed the distinction of being the

first person to ride a bicycle in Cairo. He was admired by his school-fellows not least for the impudence with which he used to answer the masters. But in spite of everything his prospects were not very brilliant. Education is expensive in England, and F. E. Smith had made up his mind to go up to Oxford. He could not count on any assistance, but he argued that, provided that he regularly won the pick of the scholarships and prizes, he could get through his university studies without any very great expense.

At Oxford he read steadily as much as was necessary to be at the head of his year, and became at the age of twenty-four a lecturer in history. At the same time he devoted himself diligently to other occupations. He made himself a first-class shot, rider, tennis-player and swimmer. He adopted an aristocratically blasé air which he has retained from that time and which gives him the appearance of an aristocrat by blood. He played cards a great deal, played high and played well. And above all, he himself and those about him discovered that he had a quite uncommon facility in speaking. He combined natural dignity with readiness and audacity. When no more than nineteen he stood up to hoary sages and put them out of countenance. Even at Oxford it was clear that young F. E. Smith was a coming man.

While still a lecturer, Smith plunged into the law. What he needed most of all was money, and he knew himself well enough to perceive that at the Bar he would simply coin money. Before he got so far he had, however, yet another success. He was invited to a hockey match by a family where the very sweet young daughter expressed, before his arrival, her

displeasure that they had invited a learned duffer from Oxford. When she found instead a smart and elegant young gentleman who played hockey with the most complete unconcern for the lives and limbs of his fellow players, she instantly capitulated, and young F. E. Smith set up a magnificent house and bought a number of horses and sporting dogs, still without possessing any money with which to pay for them.

But money soon came. At the Bar Smith became one of the most brilliant counsel in the country. Well informed, quick at repartee and unscrupulous as he was, he evinced an unparalleled adroitness in the art of proving that black is white, and before long the big business firms were contending for him. At the same time he added to his reputation by distinguished expositions of international law. At the age of two-and-thirty he was a rich man. The foundation was laid and he could begin to think about the future.

At Oxford Smith had already declared himself a Conservative. Now, in 1906, Conservatism was on the decline throughout the country and it was feared that the leader of English Conservatism would be thrown out of his constituency. "Is Balfour thrown out? So much the more reason to put Smith in," was the political neophyte's not very modest comment. He was elected after fetching his voters to the poll at the peril of their lives, in carriages to which his racehorses were harnessed. Duly elected to Parliament he perceived that his maiden speech would be his great chance. He wrote it out and learned it by heart. On the way to the House he told his wife that he would either be a laughing-stock for all time or a great man.

In the Commons the Tories sat sad and despondent, listening to the exultations of the triumphant Liberals. Then the Speaker called upon Mr. F. E. Smith. There rose a young gentleman turned out with the utmost elegance, with an indifferent air and a sharply-cut, clean-shaven face. He kept his hands in his pockets and stretched himself with studied nonchalance. Thus he began. He omitted the plea for indulgence with which a maiden speech usually begins and at once opened fire on the enemy lines. In a cultivated agreeable voice he discharged his volleys; epigram, invective, insinuation, reasoning, all of it audacious, entertaining and witty. The very people he attacked were carried away and laughed. Lloyd George, who more than anyone else was the target for his shafts, tried to confuse the novice by an interruption, only to be superciliously rebuked. Smith ended by pointing out that in the Dissenting Chapels the Liberal victory at the polls was hailed as the work of Providence. "I," he added, "care as little as anyone else for being beaten at the card-table by foul play, but I should feel it a little nauseating if the card-sharper were publicly to declare that his success was due to partnership with God Almighty." He sat down amid roars of applause. The next speaker was Lloyd George, who began with an exceedingly flattering compliment to Smith. Lloyd George appreciated divine audacity altogether too highly not to be magnanimous in this case.

F. E. Smith had become a great man and the consolation in distress of the depleted Conservative leaders. He felt himself a little lonely among the chiefs of the nineteenth century; his point of view was new. Thus he worked desperately to prevent the Conservatives from opposing Lloyd George's

Radical Budget in the Lords. His advice was not followed, and the result was the ruin of the Upper House. Like the prudent realist that he was, he promptly recognised the hopeless obsolescence of the high-flown feudal claims of the land-owning Peers, and thus he fell out with half of his party. But as a speaker he constantly triumphed and saw with unconcealed delight his caricature in number after number of *Punch*. All the while he was carrying on his lucrative practice at the Bar, appearing in Court and winning his cases. He built himself a mansion in the country and bought a big house in London where he established himself *en grand seigneur*. During the Recesses he devoted himself to adventure, and his sporting feats in the swamps of Asia Minor, his climbings on Vesuvius in the company of Winston Churchill, and his seven-mile swim at Syracuse became widely famous.

Then the war broke out. In high spirits F. E. Smith rode about behind the front in Flanders, magnificent in his new and becoming uniform. He was, however, soon recalled to civilian service and in 1916 became a member of Lloyd George's Coalition Government in the capacity of Attorney-General. As such he had the management of all the proceedings in which Lloyd George was involved in the capacity of self-appointed autocrat, and handled the business so brilliantly that, at the end of the war, Lloyd George made him a peer and Lord Chancellor.

The latter appointment seemed to many not very well considered. The Lord Chancellor of England ranks next to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and before the Prime Minister, and the office is traditionally bestowed upon elderly peers of un-

spotted reputation. Lord Birkenhead introduced a note hitherto unheard in the Upper House; he informed the Opposition peers that they were idiots, and he assumed indecorously easy attitudes. But in the days of Lloyd George's great power the consent of Parliament was a negligible quantity; the House of Lords did not worry the Lord Chancellor in the least, and he filled his exalted office with brilliance, as well as making four or five speeches a day on various topics.

By that time Birkenhead had become a type, and the common people of England appreciate types. He was fond of talking about himself, but did so in an entertaining fashion. They knew that he was a hardworking man, a clever man and a courageous man. He sailed about in his charming yacht during the Recesses and had constant luck in meeting with adventures. Once he was cruising in the Mediterranean; his eyes had been severely overstrained and he was under doctors' orders to give up his cigars. In a full gale off the African coast something went wrong with the engines and the yacht was driving helplessly on the rocks. The situation was hopeless. Birkenhead went up to his captain and ordered a bottle of champagne. "Steward," he added, "if you have a box of cigars on board, open it and bring it here." He explained to the captain that as there was no longer any need to think of his eyes he would at least have a cigar before it was all over. Calm and cheerful he sat and waited, drank and puffed. Suddenly the wind shifted; the yacht drove out to sea again and the peril of death was for the moment over. It is the qualities displayed in a situation such as this which have gained for Birkenhead the respect of his fellow-countrymen. Another

time he was sitting on his yacht and playing bridge with a distinguished guest. Suddenly the boat heeled over so that a bottle of cognac came into disastrous contact with the ceiling. Birkenhead had just dealt when he met the scared glance of his partner. He looked through his cards and raised his voice so as to be heard in the turmoil. "Four no trumps." Even in quieter situations an initial bid of four no trumps is a thing characteristic of Lord Birkenhead.

When Lloyd George was overthrown Birkenhead fell also. He fought like a lion for Lloyd George and followed his leader loyally out into the wilderness of private life. Birkenhead has never been able to forget or to forgive the Conservatives for having broken with the Coalition Liberals. His leading political idea has been that the strife between the constitutional parties is senseless; there exist according to Birkenhead only two parties, the Constitutional and the Socialist. "War to the knife with the latter, but do not dig up long-forgotten subjects of contention with the Liberals"—that was the thesis which he developed in a thousand different ways. The United States are his social ideal, and in the course of his numerous journeys round the world he stays by preference in America, where he has friends among millionaires and ex-Presidents.

Birkenhead was "out" for a couple of years. He wrote articles in the newspapers for fabulous remuneration, and books, the best of which is *Contemporary Personalities*, in which he draws elegant portraits of his distinguished fellow-countrymen. Birkenhead has grown more dignified with the years; his style has an admirable grace coupled with wit and great knowledge of humanity. But he cannot

suppress his sympathies and antipathies; he does not conceal his admiration for the forceful temperaments, the pronounced personalities, and his aversion from abstract cautious types like Asquith.

In 1924 Birkenhead's star was again in the ascendant. Baldwin made him Indian Secretary in his new Government, and in that office he soon asserted himself as a leading figure. He is perhaps one of the best Indian Secretaries England has possessed of late years; he has not been able to escape paying for the sins of his predecessors, but he has made more of a bad business than anyone else could have done. During the days of the Great Strike in the spring of 1926 he played a great part and commanded the respect of the Communists by his unruffled calm and superbly confident demeanour. He is still a man in the prime of life and is himself convinced that his career has only begun.

Under Lord Birkenhead's coat of arms appears the motto: "*Faber meæ fortunæ:*" *faber*, as we know, is Smith in English. He has called himself an adventurer. "Life is an adventure. He who, without possessing anything to begin with, strikes hard while he aims high must be an adventurer." There are various kinds of soldiers of fortune. One is he who crawls before Dame Fortune's feet. The other is he who without ceremony or sighing carries off the lady in question. One may well be justified in entertaining for the latter type a respect which one refused to the former. Birkenhead does not belong to the congregation of crawlers. He has only gone the way his nature bade him choose. His incredibly forceful temperament knows no half-measures. In the foremost position as politician, jurist, student of human nature, sportsman, bridge-

player, society lion, he has yet never been anything but himself, a strong, arrogant and generous Englishman who loves success not least because it involves courage and danger. His political opponents see in him an incarnation of evil. His friends and followers are attached to him by his amiability and natural kindliness.

Leaving on one side the question of worth, one does wisely to reckon with him as a power factor. Some years since he was interrupted during an election speech by a Communist who threatened the hour of the barricades. There was a gleam in Lord Birkenhead's eye. "I'm not afraid of your barricades! We've beaten you with brains, and, if it comes to fighting, two can play at that game. Put up your barricades—and we'll slit your soft white throats for you." It was indeed no rhetorical gesture though it sounds a little strange in Swedish ears. Lord Birkenhead has somewhere related that he was won by Lloyd George when, during the war, he once heard him dismiss some conciliatory politician: "So long as there is still a British ship at sea I do not strike the flag." If we are to experience a war of barricades in England, Lord Birkenhead and his supporters will show themselves just as little inclined for compromise.

The soldier of fortune will fight so long as he can move an arm.

A PEPYS OF THE EIGHTEEN SIXTIES

IN one of George Meredith's romances, *Beauchamp's Career*, there is a character called Blackburn Tuckham. He is a fanatical Tory, and it is said of him that he appeared to stand as firmly on the ground as if, wherever he found himself, he regarded the earth under his feet as his property. In appearance it is said that he would have greatly resembled old King Henry VIII were it not that his short legs bestowed on him an appearance of solidity rather than of majestic dignity. This figure is a portrait of one of Meredith's closest friends whom the great writer had christened Tuck: "A dangerous man, Sir, for he tempted us to love this life and to take it for a thing of value, but a man whom one could not learn to know without loving." Meredith's friend Tuck was a lawyer who in ordinary life was called William Hardman.

The fortunes of Hardman are not noteworthy. He was born in 1828, he received a good education, he went up to Cambridge, became a well-to-do London lawyer and from the year 1872 till his death in 1890 was manager of the *Morning Post*. His life was fortunate and serene. He had certain hopes of winning fame as an author, but he found it most expedient not to allow his plans to come to fulfilment. He remained during his whole life tolerably unknown except to his rather large circle of friends, for his journalistic activity consisted in the economic

direction of the paper, not in the authorship of the articles. When he died his memory seemed to vanish with him.

Yet in 1923 William Hardman became a notable man, and the reason is that, thirty-three years after his death, he made his début as an author and undoubtedly "arrived." He has been found worthy to be honoured with the title of "the Victorian Pepys," and the not particularly thick but particularly costly volume in which his letters are collected has gone into a couple of editions.

Sir William Hardman had a friend who had settled in Australia. To him he wrote regularly long letters about everything of interest which had been happening in London; that is to say, which had interested Hardman, and that was nothing learned or profound. Hardman was chiefly interested in the gossip of the day, he was avid of scandal if you like, but even bits of gossip can, if properly selected, reveal a variety of things about human nature. Hardman's chronicles embrace the early eighteen sixties, and it is certain that he who reads them to the end has not only increased his knowledge of that period in London but has also established an intimate acquaintanceship with Hardman himself and a whole string of his friends, and finally has passed an uncommonly pleasant hour.

Those who believe in transmigration must be struck by the extreme probability that Samuel Pepys lives again in William Hardman, for these two gentlemen are in fact puzzlingly like one another. Both of them are hearty and good-natured sinners, and that we know a little more of Pepys's peccadilloes is due to the fact that he was even more candid than his Victorian double. They both

loved robust and tangible reality, roast beef, merry songs over the port glasses, and fair and well-dressed ladies. They were equally fond of the streets of London and Father Thames and the green hills of Surrey, and they both found the world good as it is. They were not great or intellectually distinguished people, but they were sound, for it is sound to love life as a matter of course and without reflection, just as it is unsound to do so methodically and to spell it with a big L. In their inmost hearts and in their solitary hours they feared God, though they often forgot His bidding in gay company and in hot blood, but they were not cynical sophists; they were not God's best children, but neither were they His worst. They worried themselves less about the philosophic virtues than about outward decency—and not even this with invariable success—but they were natural and happy, and those are qualities which should be valued, particularly in these times when they are becoming distressingly rare.

Even as authors Pepys and Hardman have the same peculiarities. They are insatiably curious; they record everything which goes on in their neighbourhood, great and small, but this peculiarity may in an author be the cause of that very desirable quality, verisimilitude. When Pepys describes the great fire of London in 1666, what is it that gives his description its classic value if not just his curious observation of everything that he could see? When Hardman gives an account of Princess Alexandra's entry into London he describes the minutest details of the toilettes of the ladies and the uniforms of the officials, he relates how one of his acquaintances tried to thrust himself into a more

important position and how a highly placed personage aroused scandal by being conspicuous by his absence, what a show the rockets made and how the crowds thronged; to put it shortly, one has the impression of having been there one's self. That is a curiosity which makes him a writer of distinction.

Like Pepys, Hardman is ingenuous and he actually writes stories about himself which most of mankind would try to sink in the depths of Lethe. He relates in one place that he went to the British Museum to get hold of a scabrous book, and Hardman is altogether too honest to pretend that his interest was in the history of civilisation. Just as he sat down with his find in the Reading Room a young parson dropped into the seat beside him. Hardman noticed the purity of the parson's expression, he saw him hold his hands before his face for a moment before beginning his work, he understood that the parson was praying, and he observed how the great theological folio volumes were handled with respect as though they were of inestimable value. Hardman became agitated, he struggled with himself, but the old Adam prevailed and he lost himself in his pornographic book. The story speaks for itself, but it is unparalleled to find it recorded in a letter to a friend and not secretly whispered to a father confessor.

In the matter of religion Hardman held with a moderate quantity. In speaking of the Prince of Wales he expresses a hope that his "religious education is not bent up or down, High or Low, but conducted along the broad and middle path." The broad way was dear to him, and he was very willing that others should bear him company. He admired the old Church of England and was wont

to plead that its members should be as well paid as possible, but that did not prevent him from sympathising at the same time with Bishop Colenso, the foremost and most violently attacked representative of so-called biblical criticism among English theologians. The first half of the eighteen sixties was a time when old and new fought for the mastery within the Church, and it was not always easy for a layman to know what he ought to believe.

Hardman tells a story which illustrates the general perplexity. They were engaged on the publication of the Biblical Dictionary, and opinions were divided as to how far liberal views ought to be admitted. When it came to dealing with the word "Ark," a controversy arose as to the spirit in which the Flood should be depicted and, for safety's sake and in the hope that with time matters would have settled down, they contented themselves with writing "Ark—see Flood." But when they came to the letter "F" the same difficulty arose. Then they wrote: "Flood—see Noah." How it went with Noah one cannot guess, but Hardman said that he was waiting to see "Noah—see Shem."

No wonder Hardman felt uncertain! If Hardman adopted a vacillating attitude to theology, he was more positive on political questions. He was fully and firmly convinced that all the country's ills were the result of Gladstone's ascendancy, and there was no crime which did not cause him to exclaim, "See, there we have the fruits of Radicalism." Gladstone not only got the blame for all robberies that Hardman heard tell of, but even for such things as his cook's imperfect insight into the culinary art, or the bad weather. Hardman was all the more surprised when he came to hear that Gladstone

proposed the reduction of the tobacco duty, for to the impassioned pipe-smoker these were uncommonly comforting tidings. From that moment he was forced to admit that even the worst of villains may have his better inspirations. Hardman's conservatism was, of course, a purely instinctive aversion from every kind of change and it had nothing whatever to do with political reflection. Where other countries than England were concerned Hardman was quite liberal-minded and his embitterment against Bismarck knew no bounds. This involved no inconsistency, for he was convinced that everything abroad was ill managed and that only in England was perfection attained. He was in the habit of expressing very strongly his contempt for those who betook themselves to foreign travel; he is convinced that nothing on earth is better worth seeing than England, and especially he is certain that no foreign hotel can serve a decent steak. In anyone who leaves England for pleasure he sees an abandoned Radical.

Hardman took an inexhaustible interest in things human and, in particular, in the all too human : he was constantly on the hunt for scandals, and one cannot help pitying him for living in the relatively respectable eighteen sixties. The Queen had, during the greater part of that decade, entirely devoted herself to her mourning for the inestimable, never-to-be-forgotten Albert, and the lady, perpetually muffled in the blackest of black, endured in her neighbourhood no indication that the tree of life bore those fruits which had an acceptable flavour to men of Hardman's type, and her rigorous principles were accepted—if in a somewhat diluted form—even by public opinion. It was at this time

that a lady was hissed out of the foyer of a theatre because she appeared in a rather low-cut dress, and an actress could not expect to be received in a decent house. It was, in a word, the fashion to be irreproachable.

Yet even in the virtuous blossom of Victorian manners a worm was concealed. Strange rumours were current about the Prince of Wales, and, if they contained any truth, one must admit that Victoria's demeanour with regard to her son is not quite inexplicable. Hardman snapped up a number of scandalous stories, and he is himself uncertain what attitude to assume with regard to the new morality. He is certainly glad that his future King is by no means a paragon of virtue, but, on the other hand, he does not wish on any account to know of any excesses. He preferred the broad middle way, and he could not bear that one should take any by-way either to the right or the left. Hardman liked to listen to the scandalous tales which are told in a whisper when the ladies have left the table and the gentlemen have started the port decanter in lively circulation, but he did not want to hear them shouted in the streets and the market-place. He wanted to enjoy the lapses as a spice in the solid plum pudding of propriety. He throve both among the sheep and the goats, but he wished to disguise the goat in sheep's clothing and only to see it on specially festive occasions.

In Rotten Row in Hyde Park, Hardman found the proper ingredients properly mixed. He liked to watch the stately lines of carriages with aristocratic and highly correct ladies reclining against satin cushions. But the dot over the *i* was an elegant little carriage drawn by the daintiest little ponies

and, enthroned in it, an enchanting apparition who was chiefly known in London by the nickname of "Skittles." Behind her carriage there was always to be seen a little troop of attendant cavaliers on horseback, and all the ladies turned away their heads when they caught sight of her well-known ponies. Skittles is portrayed in Hardman's letters, and, even in the unbecoming dress which was the mode in those days, she undoubtedly appears very lovely, whence it may be inferred that her virtue was somewhat doubtful. Among her admirers she counted members of the Royal Family and William Hardman. How far the latter acquaintanceship extended does not appear from the correspondence, but his interest in her person is obvious.

Yet Hardman would not have been the genuine human being he was if he had not been the son of his time, and it must be admitted that, judged by modern standards, he is a model of middle-class respectability. He detested "young Swinburne," whom he met a couple of times. The coming poet was drunk as usual, and sang the praises of the man whom he had chosen for his hero and his ideal. It was the Marquis de Sade whom Swinburne wished to hold up as a pattern instead of the official paragon, Prince Albert. To Hardman's honour be it said that he, in spite of everything, more nearly resembled the official paragon, and he had very little in common with Swinburne and his afterwards very numerous kindred spirits. Neither was Hardman any friend to the variety entertainments and operettas then in fashion, which he took to be a sign that mankind was beginning to be amused by mere stark idiocy. "There is at least some sense in bull-fights," he writes, "they stir the senses, but

variety entertainments are empty nonsense." What, I wonder, would Hardman have thought if he had survived into the jazz age?

Hardman was witty. He was in the habit of writing amusing verses to his friends, and his anecdotes always had point. It was this taste which led him to admire the Liberal Macaulay, who, as we know, was both witty and malicious. Hardman tells a story which is very typical of the great historian. Macaulay could not bear to hear his contemporaries praised, and he once happened to come into a company where the praises of Thackeray and Dickens were loudly sung. A young lady asked Macaulay for his opinion of the two novelists and, on the spur of the moment, he improvised this epigram:

> "Touching Thackeray and Dickens, my dear,
> Two lines sum up critical drivel;
> One lives on a countess's sneer,
> And one on a milliner's snivel."

It cannot be denied that the jealous Macaulay hit the right nail on the head.

Hardman himself did not feel the burden of jealousy; he rejoiced in everything in life. No child could have been more delighted than Hardman at the pageantry which was displayed at Princess Alexandra's reception. He rose early and went to bed late so that he might devote himself all day long to watching the pageantry, and he was just as well pleased with the splendour of the rockets as with the radiant youth of the Princess. Those days appear to us so remote that it is hard to realise that it is the same Alexandra whom a few years ago one might still encounter in the streets of

London, sitting upright and beautiful in her carriage.

Hardman, however, was never in better form than when his friend Meredith came to him and proposed a ramble in Surrey. They wandered about under the ancient oaks, on the soft swards, and in the evenings called at some picturesque inn. They were not so very like one another, for, when they sat by the window and smoked a pipe after the meal, Meredith would turn his dreamy eyes on the evening sky as he softly recited Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," while Hardman peered at a pretty girl whom he saw busying herself away by the kitchen fire, but they got on well in one another's company. Meredith, who loved the great god Pan and saw dryads hidden in the English oaks, saw in Hardman an attendant of Pan, a faun in English dress. Hardman has, too, something about him of the child of nature, but the nature is that of Surrey. A man might be given a worse character, for Surrey is a lovely county.

NAPOLEON'S STEPSON

EUGÈNE DE BEAUHARNAIS, the stepson of Napoleon, has a peculiar interest for us Swedes. In the year 1810 he was offered the throne of Sweden; it is with strange feelings that one wonders how the destiny of our country would have developed if the nomination had been accepted. Twelve years later he betrothed his daughter to Prince Oscar of Sweden; the alliance between the families of Bernadotte and Beauharnais was the last real gratification of his life.

The French historian Arthur Levy, best known by his popular work, *Napoléon Intime*, published, in the spring of 1926, a biography of Eugène de Beauharnais. Arthur Levy is by no means a great author, his book is rather colourless, and one observes nowhere any trace of the power to render vividly a dramatic situation nor of any very deep psychological comprehension. But he is a learned and conscientious investigator and has the good habit of frequently quoting letters and other documents; with the help of his book it is possible to obtain a fairly clear conception of the man who in life bore the name of Eugène de Beauharnais, and that is recommendation enough for a biography.

Eugène de Beauharnais resembled none of his forbears. His father, the well-known general of the Revolution, was by inclination a man of the old régime, by calculation president of the Jacobin

Club; altogether a particularly dubious phenomenon. Josephine, under a frivolous exterior, possessed a certain fund of common-sense, loyalty and tenacity; as a human being she is perhaps the most striking, as she is in any case the most interesting, of the family. Eugène was of quite another type. He was a gallant, chivalrous and kind-hearted man with a decided preference for an orderly life, not particularly intelligent and not particularly determined, but a well-behaved and honourable fellow. He was made for small circumstances and, if he had been able to live in them, he would have lived more happily. He could have been a pattern of a good soldier or a good citizen; he was compelled by the force of circumstance to show himself as a bad general and, at the critical moment, his character did not stand the test. His story is a sad one, but it is worth meditating over.

Eugène de Beauharnais could remember the time when the people of Paris pointed to the little son of the President of the Jacobin Club and called him "our new Dauphin." He could remember the sudden end of the Beauharnais ascendancy, when his father was borne to the scaffold and his mother in prison awaited the same fate, when he and his sister were carried round so that by their prayers and tears they might try to move those in authority. He remembered long years of uncertainty and anxiety when the outlook alternated between rose-colour and the deepest black. It was not an unusual state of things in the France of the Revolution, but for Eugène de Beauharnais it was more intolerable than for most. It is hard for the wild bird in a cage, but it is just as hard for the cage bird which is released in the waste moorland where the hawks seek their

prey and where no sheltered branch can be found to rest upon.

Eugène was a cage bird. Other youths may dream of meeting adventure, but the dream of the young Eugène was to escape adventure. He wished to become an officer, but not in the hope of winning lands and riches through fabulous exploits, but rather in the hope of being allowed to live a life of discipline and order in which all went well so long as a man did his duty, and in which he might be free from uncertainty as to what his duty was, in which he had to obey and in which it was enough for him to be an honest and gallant man.

That was Eugène's dream. Napoleon made it come true. Through his mother's second marriage Eugène suddenly got all that he desired, all which had hitherto seemed more unlikely than anything else. The following years, from the first Italian campaign up to Marengo, were the happiest in Eugène's life. He had found a master to obey who at the same time was his father; he did his work and he knew that, if he worked to the best of his ability, his career would be as rapid as it was brilliant. At Napoleon's side he was safer in a rain of bullets than he had been in his mother's salon. He accompanied Napoleon everywhere, he constantly obtained higher military promotion, which he could safely accept in the consciousness that so long as he accompanied his stepfather he had on his shoulders only the general's epaulettes without the weight of responsibility. Fighting came his way and victory. In leisure moments he sang Italian songs and won Napoleon's praise even for his baritone. It was paradise. The cloud in the sky, his mother's relations with her husband, he regarded with a certain

tranquillity; he knew that his relations with Napoleon would remain unaltered, and he was not a man to interfere needlessly in the affairs of others; he preferred to let other people settle their own.

Eugène's relations with Napoleon are indeed the true measure of his life. The attitude of the Buonapartes to Napoleon is well known; like everything else it has its explanation. Napoleon's brothers and sisters had seen him and had come under his spell before anyone yet had a presentiment of what he was; they had no reason to suppose that his exploits had any connection with the possibility that he was of a different race from his surroundings; it was more natural and, in any event, more agreeable to regard Napoleon's career as a favour of Providence to the Buonaparte family. The instrument which Providence had fortuitously chosen was in this way degraded into a source of income which was made use of to the utmost and towards which there were, after all, no obligations whatever. With Eugène it was otherwise. For him Napoleon was from the first moment the super-man and the hero who by a miracle had suddenly become his father. His first strong feeling, gratitude, was gradually transformed into a complete devotion and blind confidence. His relations with Napoleon became his religion. After the Imperial coronation and Austerlitz it became difficult for Eugène to preserve any distinction between Napoleon and God.

The confusion had been inspired by noble motives, but for Eugène it became dangerous. God is almighty; many have a tendency to claim, on the ground of this theological axiom, various very considerable private boons, and the claims of course are not always satisfied. It is easy and it is pleasant

in the intoxicating moment of fortune to thank and to glorify God; in the hour of adversity it is easy to doubt Him. After Eugène had once begun to thank and glorify Napoleon as if he were God, it is, looked at psychologically, quite evident that he soon began to expect from Napoleon that which can only be expected from one furnished with those powers which are the attribute of omnipotence. And, when the pious expectations have centred themselves around an earthly being, the road to doubt is hard to avoid.

That things fell out as they did was perhaps not altogether Eugène's fault. Even Napoleon was guilty of an over-estimation, if only of an every-day kind. Eugène was grateful, a thing which Napoleon was not used to meeting with, and he repaid gratitude with affection. He was, moreover, satisfied with the honest manner in which Eugène had performed the commissions enjoined on him. These and similar circumstances brought it about that Napoleon sometimes forgot that Eugène was a man of no great ability, incapable of taking initiative and totally devoid of foresight. Napoleon gave Eugène commissions for which other qualities than zeal and integrity were needed. And Eugène did not come up to the required standard.

In the year 1805 Eugène was Viceroy of Italy and Imperial Highness, with—in spite of some uncertainty—expectations of the succession to the French Empire. Shortly after the battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon proposed on Eugène's account for the hand of the Princess Augusta of Bavaria. The German Princess was the kindred spirit of her intended husband, with the same merits and the same deficiencies; the marriage was therefore the

happiest imaginable. In a certain sense it changed Eugène. The years at Napoleon's side had been a long ecstatic dream—he was now to experience quiet domestic happiness. His belief in Napoleon had not been weakened, but the divinity had slipped a little to one side. Napoleon was more the Providence which operates at a distance, and against that background Eugène could safely cultivate the family idyll, could love and worship his wife and child.

The Princess Augusta returned her husband's admiration to the full. It was a comfort to Eugène to hear now and then from his wife's lips that he was an exceedingly remarkable man, for at a distance his true proportions had become much more obvious to Napoleon. The manner in which Eugène intervened in the political life of Italy was usually more well-meaning than fortunate, and the affairs over which he blundered were too important for Napoleon to speak otherwise than in plain language. Yet the reproaches and the censure, which Eugène, for the matter of that, often knew to be deserved, were regularly followed by fresh evidences of loving solicitude, and Jena and Tilsit were arguments which gave increased stability to Eugène's theology. In the campaign against Austria in 1809 Eugène was in supreme command of the Italian armies; the defeat at Sacile, very disastrous for the cause of France, was his most noteworthy achievement. Napoleon blamed him less for his blunder than for having omitted, after the reverse, to give information exact enough to enable Napoleon as far as possible to retrieve the situation. Eugène was a little surprised: had Napoleon actually need of anything so petty as details and precise reports of trifles?

During the divorce, so trying for him, on natural

grounds, between Josephine and Napoleon, Eugène behaved with admirable loyalty and dignity. Nevertheless, it is a question whether this incident did not affect the relationship between Eugène and Napoleon more than is commonly supposed. For the first time Eugène had a feeling that he had done something for Napoleon. It may be true that, in general, it is more blessed to give than to receive, but it is decidedly more blessed to feel oneself the recipient rather than the giver, at least in one's relations with God. It appears from the letters of Eugène and his wife that Napoleon's stepson was conscious of having been magnanimous. It was a dangerous conviction, and if he forgot it for a moment the Princess Augusta was sure to remind him.

Even on the birth of the King of Rome Eugène behaved with complete loyalty. The occurrence could scarcely bring forth any quite natural outburst of enthusiasm on his part; when, in 1810, he declined the throne of Sweden, it was rather in the consciousness that he stood next in succession to another and incomparably greater one. Previously he had felt himself to be Napoleon's son, his father's Viceroy; henceforth he was Viceroy for Napoleon's son. Napoleon slipped further into the background; in the foreground stood only his wife and child.

The campaign in Russia killed Eugène's faith. Napoleon was no longer omnipotent. He was always bound to his stepson by a strong tie, but the relationship was changed. During the long tragedy of the retreat Eugène had, moreover, become thoroughly sick of soldiering; how much more agreeable was the life with his dear ones under the sky of Italy. After Murat fled, Eugène took the

chief command of the Grand Army, and for some weeks held his ground at Posen. He asked for instructions from Napoleon, but received the answer that these could only be given when he had made up his mind to communicate sufficiently full reports. This time there is anguish in Napoleon's tone; in Eugène's, indifference begins to predominate. In this disastrous hour he writes to his wife these words, which may be given in the original: "Je t'assure que près de toi, je me consolerai facilement de ne plus risquer le sort des armes."

It is humanly said, nor is it for us to cast the first stone, but it is not edifying.

When, in 1813, Bavaria allied itself with Napoleon's enemies, the Bavarian King urged his son-in-law to make common cause with his wife's family. Both Eugène and the Princess Augusta declared themselves with dignity to be incapable of such an action; Eugène wrote to Napoleon and informed him of the sacrifice he had made. Napoleon answered that he would not thank him for having done his duty; he could not have acted otherwise than as he did. One may suppose that the answer did not quite come up to Eugène's expectations. In Italy Eugène had a problem to solve which was difficult in itself and which Murat's treachery rendered hopeless. He did the best he could, although not with any very great enthusiasm. Moreover, he had now to try to take the initiative into his own hands; Napoleon, who during the defence of France against the allied armies displayed at that time more genius and energy than ever, could not, from France, attend to every detail of the defence of Italy. He had to content himself with giving hypothetical orders; the weightiest of these, the command to

try, in certain circumstances, to send the greatest possible number of troops to France, was misunderstood by Eugène. The misunderstanding cost Napoleon the crown.

Others have described Napoleon's frightful situation in those days when he waited in vain for Eugène's troops. In his letters to Eugène he expresses only a paternal confidence. Throughout that time Eugène was indeed the only one in whom he still dared to confide.

The Princess Augusta was about to give birth to a child. In the midst of that moment of catastrophe Napoleon found time to write to her to urge her to travel to Paris, the only place where she could be in safety. He received a very vehement reply from both husband and wife, explaining that there could be no talk of anything of the kind. Napoleon wrote meekly back that he did not understand the reason for their vehemence; he had thought only of their welfare. It was the last actual exchange of letters between the Titan and his stepson.

For already, when Napoleon was bidding Marie Louise send her letters to him by addressing them to Eugène, the latter had left Italy under an Austrian guard of honour to betake himself to Bavaria. He did his duty as the father of a family. His children had royal blood in their veins; he had to think of them. He had a good conscience and wrote in one of his letters: "They say that Murat is no longer able to sleep. The difference with me is that I sleep remarkably well."

Poor Eugène, he did not get through the affair without some loss of sleep. He had approached Alexander as the most powerful and most amiable of the victors in order to obtain his help in making

the best terms for himself; some throne ought surely to fall vacant. Alexander took him with him to Vienna and there left Eugène in the company of the Imperial Don Juan, a life which must have been very unfamiliar to a man of his habits. He danced through the nights and gallantly squandered jewels on accommodating beauties. It was a complete moral breakdown; nor, to judge by his letters to the actress Stephanie Lambert, did Eugène care any more about public affairs. Is it illegitimate to surmise that his wild life was connected with the circumstance that painful thoughts made his nights sleepless?

From the allies Eugène obtained a great deal of money, the title of Prince of Leuchtenberg and a castle in Bavaria. It was less than he expected, but it was always something. It was not a kingdom, but it was an idyll.

Unfortunately the idyll never became what he intended. While the brief tragedy of the hundred days was enacted Eugène kept himself pretty quiet, and the cloud disappeared. He busied himself with hunting and sang ballads, certainly not in Italian, but rather in German and with a voice which was growing a little hoarse. He tried associating with his father-in-law, a jovial old gentleman with risky stories from the Court of Louis XVI, tolerant of everyone except the opposition members of the Diet and poor poachers. He put small theatrical pieces on the stage, and trifled a little with Court intrigues.

But he was still obviously not at ease. Not even the dear Eichstaedt could efface the memories of Malmaison and Fontainebleau. Not even his father-in-law could make him quite forget his step-father. When Lord Holland asked a question in the English Parliament concerning the rumours from

St. Helena, the Prince of Leuchtenberg was seized by an obvious uneasiness. He began to write to Napoleon's bankers, and his accounts show that various sums of money found their way by secret channels to needy Buonapartists. Exiles from the France of the restoration could count upon his purse; he would not see them, but he would willingly help them. In 1818 he wrote to Alexander an agitated letter on the conditions at St. Helena; unhappily there came no answer, and then there was nothing to do in the matter, and perhaps it was just as well. In July 1821 Eugène was living in Baden with his family when he received tidings of the death of Napoleon. He ordered a suit of mourning and betook himself home; he shut himself up in one of his hunting lodges for months. Then they brought him a copy of Napoleon's will in which Eugène was thanked for " l'intérêt qu'il lui avait conservé," and was mentioned before Napoleon's brothers.

During the earlier years of the eighteen twenties Eugène underwent a rapid change. The tall and straight and slender man grew fat and inert, his face became red and bloated. He sat for the most part apathetic and seldom spoke except for a few meaningless phrases. Later on the flame of life flared up on the occasion of his daughter's marriage with Prince Oscar; the Prince pleased him by singing Swedish ballads. The following year in February 1824 death came as a deliverer. He was only forty-three years old.

In an inspired speech Eugène de Beauharnais once uttered the great and proud saying : " History will say that only they are immortal, immortal even in the memory and annals of foreign nations, who know how to live and die loyal to what they have sworn

and loyal to their duty, loyal to gratitude and honour."

Eugène de Beauharnais is right in this, that loyalty is a great quality. Unfortunately it is also very rare.

AN EMPRESS

A BEAUTIFUL American singer with the American curiosity about other people's tastes was once bidden as a guest to the Court of Napoleon the Little at Compiègne. The young lady went round with a string of indiscreet questions which those present had to answer. One of the questions was: "What is your favourite occupation?" One answered one thing, another another, and the Empress Eugénie gave the sublime answer: "To do good."

Poor Empress Eugénie, she could not have had much occasion to devote herself to what she found more enjoyable than anything else. Certainly she was Patroness of a number of charitable institutions, but the office was practically nominal—once, it is true, she visited a hospital, and it is quite possible that all the silk skirts which fluttered past caused a failing life-flame to flare up, but otherwise she seems to have contrived to resign and with equanimity to relinquish that which was dearest to her.

Meanwhile it may be questioned whether the expression "to do good" was quite well chosen. One wonders whether the Empress did not really mean "to feel good," for she seems actually to have made an effort in that direction, particularly at night before saying her evening prayers. The exalted lady, weary with the day's labours, sinks down upon a silken couch in her delicious palace

at Compiègne. She stretches out her arms, the day has been splendid. In the morning a great battue; she has seen four thousand hares and roe deer killed in a brief hour; the lawn to which the game has been driven by the beaters has become as saturated with blood as if it were a real war. And her beloved Princess Metternich has screamed with delight to see the Empress's own dogs tear a hart to pieces—the young Princess Metternich with the red lips and the quick tongue, the Austrian ambassadress and the darling of the French Court, who among other things makes the Empress laugh when at a State banquet she spits out the meat which she thinks bad, and who fascinates everyone by the grace with which she performs somersaults and shows her —— yes, the Empress is glad to have shown the Princess how a proper hunt should be managed. And afterwards the dinner has been *such* a success, and the Empress is thoroughly grateful to the good God, and wants to be really good for a while. But what is she to do? Give something to the poor? But the fireworks for that day cost pretty nearly a million francs, and then there are frightful dress bills from Worth still unpaid, and besides, it isn't her fault that she lives in a palace. The Empress's features assume a brooding expression for a couple of seconds, but suddenly they light up. She beckons to her reader. "*Ma chère*, read me something of our own M. Octave Feuillet."

The Emperor Napoleon likes to be popular among the intellectuals, and celebrated authors are now and then invited to Compiègne. But the Empress Eugénie does not care about all of them. Just now she has staying with her that odd Monsieur

Gautier who, at the dinner-table, will talk about nothing but his cats, and who sometimes, when he catches sight of a young and pretty lady in the neighbourhood, won't say a word to the lady he takes in. And then there is that naughty Monsieur Mérimée who certainly speaks English much better than the English Ambassador but who, for all that, is decidedly not a real gentleman, seeing that all the ladies complain that the expression of his eyes is so enigmatical when he bows and pays a compliment, and who strews round him a mass of sayings at which one has to laugh in case they should be so intended, but which are very hard to understand. But fortunately we have also our dear M. Feuillet who is so obliging and tactful, who writes little one-act plays for the delightful little private theatre, with the heroine's parts adapted for the Empress, little plays in which the kiss which puts an end to the adverse destinies of the hero and heroine only happens in imagination after the fall of the curtain, so that the Empress can play the part without making her exalted consort jealous. And M. Feuillet has always a noble and elevated moral, and there is never anything not nice or displeasing in his writings and one feels so satisfied and good in reading them. Yes, M. Feuillet is a veritable treasure.

The Empress makes a sign with her hand, and the reader begins the reading of *The Fortunes of a Poor Young Man*, a long novel which lasts for several evenings. The Empress becomes interested at once. The book treats of a young marquis who suddenly becomes terribly poor. His father dies ruined, and the young marquis is obliged to take a situation as steward. To think that there should

be people so poor, only six thousand francs a year and all found. But the marquis is no ordinary man, he doesn't whine like the rabble in Paris, he bites his lips and keeps his sufferings to himself. He—a marquis—makes no bones about taking, under an assumed plebeian name, a situation as steward on a large estate where he has more than enough to do in going for rides, playing cards and conversing. The unfortunate marquis who is so poor; "but," thinks the Empress, "if the poorest are no worse off than this, it is quite shocking that they should make such a fuss as they do." The noble marquis soon arouses notice although he conceals his high birth. On the estate there is a young lady who is sole heiress to immense wealth, and she naturally falls in love with the noble marquis, who, at the risk of his life, jumps one day into a waterfall *à la* Niagara to rescue her silk handkerchief. Another time the marquis bailiff has ascended a lofty and romantic tower with the lovely young heiress to enjoy the view, but, when they want to get out of the tower, it turns out that someone—presumably a fairy—has locked the tower door. In order that the young lady may not be compromised the noble marquis dashes up the tower and throws himself out into space, falls a couple of hundred metres—no exact figure is given—and injures himself badly, but with broken arms and legs he runs for help. No wonder the young lady was impressed. The marquis loves her in return, but he is poor and his pride forbids that he should marry the lady of his heart, for she might think that it was for the sake of her money. It is true the marquis discovers an old manuscript from which it appears that an ancestor of the young lady, a grisly pirate, had attacked and plundered one

of the marquis's forbears when he was returning with a ship laden with gold and spices, and thus all her money properly belongs to the marquis. But the noble marquis of course burns the document and determines to go silent to his grave. The young heiress then contemplates giving up all that she possesses to the poor so that nothing may stand in the way of her union with the noble marquis, and the young heiress's no less noble mother is enthusiastic over the project. However, the marquis makes friends with a very poor and very noble duchess who makes him her heir and dies at the convenient moment. Among her papers the noble marquis finds an old grant from Spanish royalties, Ferdinand and Isabella or whoever it was, which secures him an immense treasure.

The Empress Eugénie now begins to find a difficulty in keeping trace of all these blood-stained documents and hidden treasures, and she interrupts the reader: "*Ma chère*, how did it end?" The reader reads the last page, from which it appears that the marquis became rich and the rich girl became marquise, and the noble marquis gave a large sum of money to his sister for her dowry. Think of it!

The Empress Eugénie falls into thought and meditates on what she has been listening to. There is so much that is beautiful in the book. M. Feuillet is both realist and idealist, he gives flesh and blood to his characters, but the whole is raised up, as it were, into a higher sphere. The heroine is so much of the earth that she can actually sit and eat strawberries, but the prosaic occupation becomes poetic when M. Feuillet describes it: "The berries were sprinkled with sugar and disappeared like melting scarlet between her dazzling white teeth."

But above all it is so good to read M. Feuillet because his characters are so noble and exalted; he is more improving to read than that dreadful M. Mérimée. The Empress has a peculiar weakness for this book, *The Fortunes of a Poor Young Man*. Truly it appears most clearly that the poor need not be like the dreadful people in Paris, they could be like the noble marquis. And what shall we say of the marquis? It is certainly terribly hard on him, but, if he had not gained something by being so poor, perhaps he would not have been so utterly noble. His cross has its reward. Ought one really to go about feeling that it is so hard on the poor? When all is said, did not the marquis have a pretty good time? Yes, the Empress ventures actually to toy with the thought; she need not altogether shudder at the lot of the poor, at the lot of the noble marquis. She would tell her confessor so next time and get commendation for it; their case after all was not so very hard. And for the matter of that had she not a heavy cross herself? Even as to this she obtains enlightenment from M. Feuillet. You see, he describes the rich young heiress as constantly going about looking melancholy. Why, when she had everything she could desire? To be sure, she sighed under "the heavy burden of riches and beauty." The Empress Eugénie has a right to be proud of herself. She bears the heavy cross not only of riches and beauty but also of the Imperial dignity, and she does so with patience, yes, with God's help, she bears it gladly. All through the trying day she has maintained her good-humour and has smiled uninterruptedly throughout the shooting party.

And the Empress Eugénie rises with a feeling of

sincere gratitude towards the good M. Feuillet. She permits them to prepare her prie-Dieu. M. Feuillet has put her in the proper frame of mind. She gives thanks to the Saviour for the burden of the Cross, the weight of which is delightful, and she feels herself to have the strength—if God should demand it, which, however, is not very likely—even to bear the heavy cross of poverty with the same resignation as the noble marquis.

So the Empress Eugénie goes to bed well pleased with God, herself and the good M. Feuillet, and her last thought before she sleeps the sleep of the just is that if everyone possessed the same Christian patience there would be no discontent and no revolutions.

THE BROAD WAY

SEVERAL years ago Nils Sjöberg and Nils Erdmann published, in six volumes, a selection of the enormously extensive diary left by Carl Tersmeden. Even this selection, on account of its bulk, is not one of the books one reads at a sitting; a selection from the selection, which squeezes the most essential of the material into one volume which one can get through in a couple of hours, is therefore a novelty which ought to be hailed with joy by the general public, for Tersmeden's memoirs are among the most entertaining that our Swedish literature possesses. Ann Margaret Holmgren, who has undertaken the delicate task of making the selection, has performed her difficult work with skill and taste; the volume which she has compiled is not only vastly entertaining, it is also so arranged that one obtains from it a clear idea what sort of people Carl Tersmeden and a number of gentleman and ladies in his circle were, both in the world's eyes and in reality. And at least Carl Tersmeden himself is an acquaintance worth making.

He was altogether a son of the eighteenth century; Frederick I's decided favourite, he incurred the decided displeasure of Gustavus III. He won a certain renown as a seaman and a partisan; his head is, however, the least interesting part of him; it was, in actual fact, pretty mediocre. On the other hand, he had many merits; a thirsty throat, a kind heart, a

strong stomach, a smooth temper, a gigantic and extraordinarily well-made body and quite phenomenal luck at the card-tables. It was really his figure and his luck at play which made him what he became.

Carl Tersmeden himself relates that at sixteen months old he was so big and strong that he carried a large stool to his nurse and ordered her to sit on it to give him his dinner. The statement sounds a little improbable, but in any case Carl Tersmeden grew up into a veritable giant, even into a very magnificent one. I had an old divinity teacher who used to demonstrate the heterodoxy of the contention of the Gnostics, that matter is altogether evil, by maintaining that the bigger a man's body the more good-natured he is. Though uncommonly tall he could scarcely be said himself to illustrate the justice of his thesis; on the other hand, the instance of Carl Tersmeden can without doubt be advanced as proof of the error of the Gnostics. For it is self-evident that the man's mental attitude stood in a definite relation to the length of his body. Constantly stronger than his comrades and contemporaries, he escaped the pain and humiliation which result from a good hiding, and from his youth up was the leader of the party wherever he went and was sought after as a friend and ally. As he had, moreover, the advantage of possessing an extremely rich father, it was his lot from the beginning to march with long strides along the broad way through life. So long as a man keeps to that way he is often good-natured and friendly, nor is it so very difficult to be so. And good-natured and friendly Carl Tersmeden was. On the other hand, a man seldom develops either a very pronounced personality or a

keen intellect from this promenade; the young giant was neither original nor brilliant and did not become more so in the course of his illustrious career.

Carl Tersmeden's father, a wealthy landowner and at the same time something of a *Caroline*,[1] gave his sons an excellent education, and so far as the son Carl was concerned he had early made up his mind that he was cut out for a naval life. So at the age of fifteen he became a cadet in the volunteer Company of Admiral Count Taube, the customary preparatory school for service as an officer in King Frederick's fleet.

It was as a young cadet that Tersmeden discovered at the card-table the feelings which the goddess Fortuna entertained for him. Not that the naïve and confiding youth by any means believed that the power which helped him to success in play was any heathen divinity; on the contrary, he never omitted, when he had cleaned out his play companions down to the bare skin, to hasten to a private room and give thanks with tears to Him who had so wonderfully helped him. And in truth Tersmeden had good reason to thank God—or somebody else—for his luck at play. From the age of seventeen he began to live sumptuously entirely on his winnings. As, moreover, he was aware that the higher the stakes the better it was for him, he would always seek out those players who made no bones about the stakes, that is to say, the powerful and the rich. The acquaintances that he thus procured for himself were useful; at the head of them stood no less a person than his Majesty King Frederick himself. The old German had a great weakness for Tersmeden, called him "*der*

[1] Veteran of Karl XII's army.

Lange" and treated him with great benignity. Gracious nods and friendly words made all the more impression on the young cadet that they were often accompanied by a royal handshake which left a bulging and well-lined silk purse in the bold gambler's hand. Tersmeden admired his King as sincerely as his *Caroline* father had admired King Frederick's predecessor. Tersmeden took occasion to celebrate veritable orgies of royalism when the daughter of his old chief, Admiral Taube, sixteen years old and as pretty as a picture, had to accept from his Majesty a proposal bearing evidence of the royal benignity. The fair Fröken Hedvig seems not to have felt the true Swedish royalism : she went so far as to say that she found it hard to be forced " to sacrifice my honour to save a family ruined by play," but Carl Tersmeden, who was convinced of the presence of Providence at the card-table, was, no doubt, able to see the finger of God in this great occurrence also. He speaks solemnly about a call from Heaven which conferred on the young beauty the pleasant lot of establishing not only her family's happiness but also that of the kingdom, and when the affair is arranged he is at a loss to describe his pleasure. Let us not misjudge Carl Tersmeden : all frivolous thoughts were far removed from his blond head, and the union of King Frederick and Hedvig Taube fills him merely with warmly royalist, if somewhat muddled, feelings of reverence which can only be expressed in phrases about Sweden's welfare and other sublime things. It was indeed this indescribable innocence which made him so acceptable in the eyes of the old King Frederick. No one thought more of innocence than the old roué.

Having passed his officer's examination with credit, Tersmeden resolves to spend a couple of years at sea on foreign service before beginning his naval career at home, so as to learn languages and to see something of the world and of mankind. The first great city in which he settles is Lisbon, where, thanks to his height and his figure, he has a tremendous success among the ladies. He is received by the banker Bourgerin, whose wife bursts out at his coming with a "Jesus Maria." "To see so fine a figure awakens in the ladies sensations which are unknown to us men," explains the lawful husband to the somewhat astonished young Swede.

However, Tersmeden soon gets used to it. The Portuguese women are all in love with the giant from the North, and invitations to dinners in aristocratic houses rain on Tersmeden, where the host arranges a gambling party and the hostess a rendezvous. Tersmeden rushes about mouthing his French compliments, falling on his knees to kiss the ladies' hands with languishing looks; it becomes rather tiresome at length, and Tersmeden sometimes wonders whether the enchanting Portuguese women are not too inflammable. Sometimes, too, the old austere Nordic morality awakes in him, and once he delivers to a Portuguese a high-flown oration about the Catonian virtue of the country of King Karl: "They overcome illicit desires and seek their amourettes among girls of inferior rank." That is sublime, but would be even more so if one were not aware that it was really the burden of dancing attendance and the many exertions required of him which Tersmeden found so tiresome in Portuguese upper class love affairs; fortunately he had time also for intimacy with actresses and dancers who, in love,

do not worry about the finer shades but stick to essentials, which was more to the taste of the ponderous and demure Swede.

The main features of the life in Lisbon are repeated during Tersmeden's many and sometimes prolonged descents upon Marseilles and the Italian coast towns. In England and Holland love is set on one side; except for the card-table it is really the dinner-table which takes possession of his soul, and Tersmeden soon becomes thoroughly expert in culinary lore. By reason of his bulk he is, too, a good drinker; on festive occasions he can stay above the table as long as anyone and is therefore a welcome guest as being able to watch over gentlemen of less staying power.

Thus Tersmeden begins gradually to think that he can now do all that is necessary to follow worthily on the war-path in the footsteps of the *Caroline*. He sails back to the fatherland, where he begins his naval career with a very ample spell of leave. At home on his father's estate and in the bosom of his family he takes occasion to exhibit what he has learnt, and there soon begins in the Tersmeden family a bout of eating and drinking the like of which has never been seen. On the English principle that food shall be solid, on the French that the courses shall be many, and on the Swedish that the helpings shall be enormous, Carl Tersmeden evolves a synthesis which meets with an enormous success. He speaks English with his father and discusses various ways of cooking "biffsticks"; he teaches his uncles that it sobers one to drink nothing but beer with the oysters at supper, and he dances the polka with the young people and drinks till seven o'clock in the morning. Carl Tersmeden becomes the most popular man in

the district; it would have been strange if it had been otherwise.

Thus begins his service in the Royal Navy. It appears to have been easy. In Stockholm his time is chiefly devoted to play and feasting. King Frederick has grown old, but his feelings for Carl Tersmeden seem to have become even warmer. In Tersmeden's diary the old sinner babbles away like the kindest uncle in the world. Before the war with Russia he speaks to Tersmeden of his wish to conduct the campaign himself; the young naval officer bursts out, "Ah, how fortunate we should be in that case!" and the King squeezes his hand in gratitude. But in general it is around peaceful adventures that the old German's thoughts revolve. After the death of Hedvig Taube there followed, as we know, a time of unrest and worry for his Majesty, each successor showed herself less worthy than the last. Carl Tersmeden is, however, unwearying in guidance and advice, and when, one Sunday morning, he accompanies his royal master to high mass he draws up plans for a picnic to "Claes på Hornet," where his Majesty shall have the opportunity of glancing over a really representative collection of the commodity he requires. The good King thus constantly remembers his Tersmeden with genuine favour, and when the old man lies on his deathbed he summons Tersmeden from Finland. "Mein lieber Lange," cries the King, "where have you been?" and begins to talk about his troubles. He fears the worst from Louisa Ulrika; she lacks that veneration for the constitution and the laws which has always animated himself. Tersmeden agrees, but then who is like the freedom-loving and beloved and good king Frederick? At the King's death the

gigantic fellow bursts out into such a fit of weeping that his whole body trembles.

The years pass in continual feasting. Tersmeden has fallen in love with a young girl of the upper middle class, a great beauty, but only thirteen years old, whence the wedding must be put off for a while. He has shown the lady of his choice to the King himself, who has expressed his approval, but it is to be hoped has not displayed it otherwise than in words. One of the first things he does after the betrothal is to show himself to his fiancée in a drunken state so as to demonstrate in good time that he does not become savage in this condition but is rather disposed "to kiss and cuddle." It is his future father-in-law who gives him this bright idea.

In the Russian war Tersmeden wins great honour. He gets a ship from King Frederick and makes a descent on the Åland islands, where he shoots blackgame and hares in quantities and arranges vast banquets. In consequence of the gallantry displayed he is entrusted with the commission of quelling the so-called *Dale* rising. There is a little running to and fro and chattering, till finally the Dalecarlians go home, and the fame of Tersmeden flies widely round the world.

On his marriage he obtains the command in Finland, where he and his wife spend some happy years. Social life takes up most of his time, and descriptions of banquets abound always. At Gustavus III's revolution Tersmeden, as officer commanding in Stockholm, does his master certain services and as a reward for them is promoted to Karlskrona.

There is one defect in the broad way: it is so short. Tersmeden had for many years pursued the broad way and found it delightful. Now it came

to an end. The huge figure began to look old and bent, and the sight of it no longer caused any little hearts to beat. What was worse, his luck at cards vanished. Tersmeden began to lose at the card-table. That meant financial embarrassment and economy, an end to hospitality, and with that an end to most of the ties of friendship also. At Karlskrona, into the bargain, the terrible Chapman played havoc and, instead of taking things quietly as befits and beseems a soldier of the Crown, raved and fussed about the completion and building of his nuisance of an old ship, and destroyed all comfort for Tersmeden. This Chapman simply had no consideration for social amenities. And worse sorrows yet fell on Tersmeden. His adored only son fell sick unto death. He was no longer the lovable cavalier he had formerly been, and in the place of friends he could now begin to count his enemies. In the end he retired and passed his old age in Stockholm, lonely and embittered, till in 1797 he found peace for evermore.

He was by no means an important man. His ability was praised, but it is difficult to discover on what ground. Opinions he had none. During the time of liberty he was an enthusiast for liberty, under Gustavus III an ardent royalist. He was naïve to a degree bordering on the ludicrous. He strikes one, at least in his memoirs, as having never grown up.

But he was lovable and he was good at heart. He looked at the world with pleased and friendly eyes; "*leben und leben lassen*" was his philosophy of life. He did, on the whole, uncommonly well in life, but then he had a capacity for enjoying all good things. He was honest, perhaps chiefly because he was too

shallow to be otherwise. He was charitable and obliging, a good son, brother, father and husband.

As an officer he was indeed hardly the man to fire his men to great exploits, but he tried to procure for them as pleasant memories as possible of military service. In short, he was a good epicurean. It is possible to be something better, but the majority are something much worse.

In old age he had no memories at all of great deeds accomplished. But, as likely as not, he looked forward calmly to death, conscious that no human execration had at any time attached to his name. And if he had, as we have said, no heroic deeds to plume himself on while he wrapped his dressing-gown round his legs in front of the stove, he had other memories, not so proud but still happy for the most part.

If one were to imitate the résumé of a long life by a great master quoted in this book, one could fashion Tersmeden's memories into a picture pleasant for the eyes to rest upon, with a warm light over the diverting scenes and agreeable objects. Carl Tersmeden had many things to remember: there was the good old King Frederick's friendly voice and purses heavy with gold, and German anecdotes merry and horrible; there was the triumphant feeling with which he raked in his winnings at the card-table, and there were the disconcerted looks of the other players; there was the polka at home at Larsbo, and lovely and passionate Portuguese and Italians; there were all the "biffsticks" and the well-known happy, heated faces round the bowl; there were hunting expeditions and fishing jaunts; there was the Swedish country house life and the rollicking adventures in England and

Algiers; there were his son's matchless talents and accomplishments, and there was a sweet girl of thirteen summers who, blushing, lowers her eyes when her huge dancing partner kisses her hand.

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